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## THE CHAMPAGNE COUNTRY.



THE  
CHAMPAGNE COUNTRY.

BY  
ROBERT TOMES.



NEW YORK:  
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS,  
416, BROOME STREET.  
1867.



Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1867, by  
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To  
MY FRIEND,  
RICHARD E. MOUNT, JR., Esq.



## PREFACE.



RHEIMS, pronounced by its people as if it were spelled *Rans*, is but a four hours' ride from Paris, on the railway to Strasburg. Its great Cathedral, its other antiquities, Roman and mediæval, and the more material objects of interest which the town offers as the chief centre of the manufacture of champagne wine and woollen fabrics, can be seen, as travellers are wont to see, in a half a day. Our countrymen, however, though swarming over Europe, are so fond of hiving within the luxurious delights of Paris, or, when on the wing, of fluttering in the glare of fashionable notice, that they care not to wander, even for a moment, from the lustfulness of the French capital, or the publicity of the European highways. It is thus that Rheims, with no incitement to expense and no occasion for display, is generally unheeded by the profuse and ostentatious American traveller. During my residence

of nearly two years in the town, there was not more than a dozen of my countrymen who visited it, notwithstanding that at the same time Americans in Paris were counted by tens of thousands, and unnumbered flocks of them were thronging the fashionable routes of France and the Continent of Europe. I hope, however, to have shown that Rheims, though unnoticed by the frivolous traveller, is of sufficient interest to justify, in the opinion of the sober-minded, this record of my observations.



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# THE CHAMPAGNE COUNTRY.

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## CHAPTER I.

A French Town in Olden Time—Change—Arrival at Rheims—  
From Railway Station to Hotel.

IT was something of an event, in olden times, the getting to a French provincial town. The stout Norman horses of your post-chaise, or of the diligence, their blood heated toward the last stage by the joint efforts of the heavy boots and smarting lash of the postilion, galloped through the great iron gate, past whiskered sentinel, into the very midst of the place. Your arrival was announced by the loud crack of the whip of the postilion, who had been busy for the last mile or two in adjusting a new snapper for the occasion; and your lumbering vehicle, swaying from side to side until it almost touched the projecting houses of the narrow street, clattered loudly over the great stones, and awakened the sleepy old town to a lively consciousness of your arrival.

You were a traveller in those days, and appreciated, as a traveller likes to be. A flock of the

"sons and daughters of poverty," as Sterne calls them, followed you. The bended head of the aged beggar bent lower, the pale face of suffering woman forced up a beseeching smile of welcome, and tattered boys and girls strove to check their instinctive laughter, and assume a seeming respect. They all saluted you, and each demanded of *milor Anglais* a sou for "the love of God." Coppers rained down upon them. Whether vanity or charity was the source of the shower it mattered not, at least as far as they were concerned. It brought some crumbs of comfort to their spare feasts. "Let no man say, 'Let them go to the devil,'—'tis a cruel journey to send a few miserales; and they have had sufferings enow without it. I always think it better," says Sterne, "to take a few sous out in my hand; and I would counsel every gentle traveller to do so likewise; he need not be so exact in setting down his motives for giving them; they will be registered elsewhere."

You drove with great noise into the court-yard of the old hotel, and your travelling importance became still more manifest. A more obsequious group welcomed you. They were all there, the *maitre d'hotel* with his freshly combed wig and blandest manner; the *maitresse d'hotel* in her most expansive cap and with her sweetest smile; the *garçons* with their napkins, the badges of service, hanging from their arms, keeping respectfully within the shadow of their capacious master; the *femmes*



*de chambre* giggling in the rear; and the *chef* taking the occasion of ventilating himself at the door of his kitchen as he lifted his white cotton cap in honor of the new-comer, and scrutinized his probable capacity for *filets* and his other claims to consideration.

Every one said that he was charmed to see you, and said it with such an emphasis of apparent frankness that you believed it. You were bowed and smiled by all out of the chaise, you were bowed and smiled up the stone steps, you were bowed and smiled into the hall, you were bowed and smiled up-stairs, and finally bowed and smiled into your room. Each one seemed almost ready to kiss you, not excepting the snuffy landlord and the greasy cook. The welcome you received radiated so warm a glow that you hardly remarked the chilly discomfort of the stone halls, windy corridors, and naked rooms of the decrepit old structure, in which you had taken up your temporary home. Intensely beloved, as you had reason to believe, by every one in the hotel, from the expansive Monsieur Jacques in the white waistcoat to the trim little Mademoiselle Sophie in the red velvet bodice, who in the warmest expressions have daily given you the strongest pledges of affection, you did not doubt that each man, woman, and child, was ready to sacrifice his or her all for you, until you had seen the bill. Twelve *bougies*, three bottles of *Chateau Margaux*!—there were only two,—fifteen francs

a piece, and bad at that. "It's enormous! it's a swindle! I won't pay it."

"Pardon, Monsieur! Monsieur deceives himself. The *Lion d'Or* never makes some errors. Ask of *milor Anglais* who lives in London, Sir Smith or Sir Brown, I know not what, I cannot call back to myself his name, and Monsieur the Prince of Esterhazy, who comes here all the days when he makes visits to France. All the great world comes to the *Lion d'Or*, and one never hears a complaint before Monsieur. Monsieur deceives himself."

"You must change the bill, Monsieur Jacques, or I will positively not pay it."

Your resolute attitude compels the extortionate landlord, possibly to make a deduction of a third part or so of the overcharge, and you may be smiled and bowed out, as you were smiled and bowed in; but you depart with a suspicion that Monsieur Jacques was not so friendly, and Mademoiselle Sophie so loving, as they pretended to be.

This is all changed now. The railway with its iron paths extending all over France as elsewhere, and its quick communications, has pushed down the old barriers, and let into every ancient town and village a daily crowd of visitors. The whole world, ever going and coming, has become mixed into a flowing and uniform mass. The individuality of the traveller is lost in that indefinite aggregate of humanity termed the travelling public. Sterne would be puzzled now-a-days to distinguish

one from another in the “whole army of peregrine martyrs.” He would be forced to put the quick-moving throng under the one class of “Travellers of Necessity,” for all are irresistibly impelled by steam. No one seems to have any other motive than to arrive and depart, and hardly an eye for aught but the time-table. There are still doubtless idle, inquisitive, lying, proud, vain, splenetic, and simple travellers; but they are all so shaken up together, and so rapidly swept forward in the flowing mass, that they are neither sufficiently distinct nor at rest to be recognised.

I was much struck, on my first arrival at Rheims, with the great change effected by the modern system of travel. This old town, where the first Christian king of France was consecrated; where church and cathedral, a thousand years old, still stand defiant of time! where the Black Prince had fought and Joan of Arc triumphed,—the *Ville Sainte*, as it has been called, the Christian capital of the Gauls,—must surely, I thought, have successfully resisted modern innovation. When, therefore, after having been shot out of the very heart of Paris at the rate of thirty miles an hour, through the vine hills of Champagne, and, in less than four hours’ time, discharged with a large load of miscellaneous people at a station which I was told was Rheims, I could hardly believe the fact.

The station, or *gare*, as it is called, is like most of those in France, a pretty enough structure of light-

colored stone, and of iron and glass. The railway servants and *gens d'armes* are polite but arbitrary. They will insist upon subjecting you to a sort of military discipline, ordering you into single file, and halting you, until they have done twisting their mustaches and are ready to march you out. All this is very systematic and possibly necessary, but it is not flattering to one who is old enough to have travelled in the ancient days of post-chaise and diligence. Your railroad official is evidently no respecter of persons, in fact, he does not regard the individual at all. *Votre billet, Monsieur*, "Your ticket, Sir," and according to its classification and address, you are thrust in here or put out there, just like any other package which, without any regard to the nature or value of its contents, is transported from place to place as marked and directed.

At Rheims, as now almost everywhere in the provinces, your dignity is not even complimented with the offer of a separate carriage, but a loud shout of "*Omnibus! Lion d'Or!*" "*Maison Rouge!*" "*Hôtel de Commerce!*" "*L'Abre d'Or!*" "*L'Hôtel Colbert!*" addressed to no one in particular, but to the crowd in general, salutes your ear. You are borne out by the throng, and catching by a quick glance the name *Lion d'Or* you twist yourself in the direction of its omnibus, whose door gapes wide open, in a line with some half-dozen others, and you are finally, if alert, swept into the right vehicle on a wave of tossing crinoline and confused broadcloth.

Once in the omnibus with crushed hat and ruffled temper, you strive in vain to settle yourself. You are resisted by heaps of unaccommodating hand-boxes and angular travelling inconveniences of all kinds. You get no practical sympathy from the whiskered monsieurs and crinolined madames, who are the most politely uncivil people in the world—crowding you out of your seat, puffing bad cigars into your face, and doing other very disagreeable things with the utmost profusion of apology and sweetness of smile. You complain of a neighbor who is stifling you with the smoke of a three-sou cigar: “*Mille pardons, Monsieur. Monsieur, you have reason, truly; one does not find more good cigars;*” and he goes on puffing more vigorously than ever. You express, by a very translatable phrase of countenance, the uneasy sensation produced by the constant rubbing against your knees of the iron-bound *sac-de-nuit* of the female passenger opposite. She gives you an ineffable smile of sympathy in return, but her confounded box continues to chafe you until the end of the journey.

There is little to be observed from a low-roofed, crowded omnibus, where all the senses and faculties you may possess are fully occupied in taking care of your best Parisian hat, and guarding your toes, knees, and ribs, against the dangerous encroachments of your fellow-passengers and their inexorable accompaniments.

In your rapid transit from *gare* to hotel you,

however, catch a glance now and then, in spite of your preoccupation with the care of yourself, of the town, and its people. You discover at once that Rheims has two existences, the old and new.

From the station, with its fresh structures of Caen stone, where all is flurry, movement, and noise, there extends around the town a wide belt of new streets and buildings. This part has all the modern look of useful uniformity that belongs to the era of the railway, and dates from its construction some eight or ten years ago. There are long boulevards, with rows of pretentious private houses, great structures with tall chimneys, new churches, and a wide suburb of small tenements filled with working people, and smutty with the smoke of the foundries and factories about which they cluster. With that unfailing regard for modern France for the pleasures of the people, there has been provided a wide walk with gardens, which are already gay with *parterres* of flowers, and adorned with an excellent statue in bronze of Colbert, the great minister of finance. The trees of a few years' growth cast as yet but a spare shade; but the old men, nurses, children, and loungers of Rheims do not fail to seek what they can get of it.

Leaving the new *gare* and the stretch of its contemporary boulevard, with its cheerful promenade and showy row of pretentious houses, the omnibus passes through an older but still modern portion of the town, which is enlivened by thriving shops and gay *cafés*.

I did not become fairly conscious of the existence of the old town until the omnibus drove up to the *Hôtel du Lion d'Or*, which shrinks humbly in the shade of the great Cathedral. That stately monument has stood for more than six centuries! With such a venerable witness to testify to the age of Rheims, I could no longer doubt its antiquity.

## CHAPTER II.

Lion d'Or at Rheims — Cold Reception — The Shade of the Cathedral — An Old Hotel — Ancient and Modern Comforts — A Luxurious Landlord — A French Marriage — Cook and Waiter — Living — Guests — *Commis Voyageurs* — English Travellers — Broad and Narrow Church — British Eccentricity — American Visitors.

IF any one who, in this era of railroads, is dropped out of the omnibus into the sombre court-yard of the *Hôtel du Lion d'Or* of Rheims, expects to be received with the honors of ancient days, he will be disappointed. The democracy of modern travel does not recognize the *milord* of the old regime. There is no bland Monsieur Jacques or sweet-smiling Madame at the *Hôtel du Lion d'Or*, at any rate, to offer service with bended knee and obsequious protestations of fidelity.

A little squat tallow-faced man, with a big head of greasy hair, fat, limped, and pale from want of light, air, and exercise, shows himself momentarily at the door, and bestows a sickly smile upon the whole omnibus load. Each passenger thus comes in but for the faintest share of the weak welcome of the factotum of the establishment.

Overhearing myself described as *un des gens qui*



sont arrivés par l'omnibus, "one of those people who came by the omnibus," I became at once conscious all my diminished importance, and summoning all my powers of self-reliance, looked out for my own interest.

A tired traveller, unsoothed by the flattery of polite words and officious attention, is easily ruffled in temper, and sharpened by anger is quick to feel the discomforts of an ill-provided hostelry. I was no sooner within the bleak walls of the *Lion d'Or*, than I discovered its wants of all the requisites of a well-appointed inn. Kept standing on the stone floor of the bare hall awaiting my turn to be inscribed on the ragged entry-book, until my patience was nearly exhausted, I finally received a key, heavily weighted with brass chain and number, and was left, with a few confused words of direction, to find my way to the appointed bed-chamber.

The room, uncarpeted, and its floor alternately sticky and slippery from irregular polishing, with its decrepit furniture and faded hangings, gave no promise of comfort. The sun was shining brightly as I alighted in the court-yard, but as I entered my chamber, although it was still noon, I found it as dark almost as a dungeon. I drew aside the curtains and looked out of the window. My sight was, as it were, suddenly blocked by a dark mass, the limits of which, in any direction, I could not discover from my point of view. This was the great Cathedral, which, separated from the hotel

only by a narrow street, darkens it with a perpetual shadow.

As time habituated me to the sombre atmosphere of my room, and my consciousness became fully awakened to the presence of my imposing neighbor opposite, I learned to appreciate the gloom in which I was shrouded, and would not have exchanged it for the brightest sunlight that ever shone. The obscurity was in tone, with the architectural massiveness of the great Cathedral, and in the day-time there was light enough to follow, with my eye, the intricacies of the rich tracery, and the ever-varying lines of the sculptured figures of that part of the colossal structure which closed up my window.

There has been a *Hôtel du Lion d'Or* on the same site as the present one, ever since the first stone of the Cathedral was laid, more than six centuries since. The hotel, as it now stands, may be a hundred years old. It is a plain structure of stone, and although when it was built it may have been deemed a marvel of convenience, it by no means offers those comforts which the traveller now demands. In the time of the post-chaise and diligence, when those who travelled were rare, and landlords appreciated them accordingly, the *Hôtel du Lion d'Or* acquired the reputation of being one of the best in France.

The American, accustomed to the manifold comforts of the hotels of the large cities and towns of

his own country, is surprised at the comparative wretchedness of provision of the *Hôtel du Lion d'Or*. He has been told that it is the best inn in Rheims, a town of great trading importance, containing no less than sixty thousand inhabitants, and naturally expects, if not the luxury, at least some of the convenience of the modern hotel. He finds neither. There is no reception or reading-room. If one cares to read the solitary copy of the *Journal des Debats* taken by the establishment, and has patience to wait until every one else has read it, and is then fortunate enough in finding it, he will be obliged to peruse it probably while standing in the hall. There is no bath to be had. There is not a solitary female servant in the hotel, and in many of the rooms not even a bell to awaken the sleepy male ones. The locks, keys, and fire implements having been made a hundred years ago, when all France was not capable of making either one of them, it is impossible ever to close door or window perfectly, and to make the attempt without skinning your knuckles, or to lift a coal until after a dozen persevering efforts.

At the *Lion d'Or* you may see the landlord occasionally dining sumptuously in the best parlor, and absorbing the attention of cook and waiter at the expense of every guest. He is of course too much occupied with his partridge and champagne to be disturbed by any one. If you have occasion

to see him at another time, you will be told probably that he has gone to the races, trying a new horse, or dining in town. Guests come and go without ever knowing that there is any other hotel proprietor than the little flaccid *factotum* in the hall, who is every thing by turns,—treasurer, *maitre d'hotel*, and head waiter.

The present is the third of the three generations of the same family by which the hotel has been kept. The first proprietor had been a cook, who was enabled by the drippings of the grease-pot to make money enough to purchase the hotel from his master. The second, his son, inherited it in the "due course of nature," and having retired with a fortune of half a million of francs or so, lives, a portly *bourgeois*, grandly at Rheims. Having two children, he has given the hotel to the elder, a scapegrace of a son, who considers that the *Lion d'Or* exists only to administer to his own pleasure, and who accordingly gives no heed to the comfort of his guests. The reputation of the hotel, established by the father and grandfather, has still a sufficient traditionary influence to make it the most frequented and best paying inn of the town. Of course it will not be long before some stranger, a son of modern enterprise, will come to Rheims, and starting near the railway station a *Grand Hotel*, gather all the scattered travellers, who now are so ignominiously treated by the dozen little mean taverns of the place. The jockey pro-

prietor of the *Lion d'Or* finding his inheritance thus sensibly diminished, will be forced to come down from his high horse, or any other animal in his keeping.

There was an episode in the history of this young prodigal which is so illustrative of French Society that I cannot forbear telling it. His father, finding that what with his costly stud of fast horses and the expenses of a faster mistress, he was not only neglecting the business of the hotel, but spending more than its profits, determined to make the attempt to reform him. The appointed means in France is, as is well known, marriage. The father accordingly looked out for a wife for his son. This was easily found, as money, not character, is what is demanded by the anxious parents of France, and of the former, the family of the would-be husband had a goodly share.

The wife of the younger brother suggested her bosom friend, a girl just out of school, as a suitable victim. Proposals were immediately made and accepted by her parents. In two weeks after, the young proprietor of the hotel brought back a blooming bride of some eighteen summers. Before her marriage, by which she, or rather her parents, had bargained away her life-long existence, from the verge of childhood to the end of her days, for the small consideration of the uncertain profits of the *Lion d'Or*, she had seen her husband but a single day, and then only under the watchful eye of her mother.

The fast young proprietor of the hotel, by a perseverance in his wild pranks, kept the eyes of his tender young bride constantly bathed in tears throughout the whole honeymoon. Parents, however, having interposed and bribed away a saucy rival, I am happy to record that the pretty wife of mine host of the *Lion d'Or* was beginning to smile again at the prospect of the commencement of her husband's reformation.

Thanks to Henri, the head waiter, and Anselme, the cook, who have descended from the time of the father of the present proprietor of the hotel, a fair dinner, tolerably well served, can be had at the *table d'hôte* for four francs, wine included. Both, however, presume occasionally upon their privileges as old and indispensable servants of the house, and have their troublesome humors even when sober, and while drunk,—no rare occurrence,—sauce, service, and temper are alike turned awry.

A wide-awake stranger, or an *habitué* of the hotel, can live tolerably cheap at the *Lion d'Or*. I had two of the best rooms in the house, and all my meals, for about three hundred francs a month. It costs ordinarily from eight to ten francs for a day's living, but a sharp eye must be kept on the charges for *bougies* and other extras, or this amount may be greatly exceeded.

Like most hotels, the *Lion d'Or* receives a very miscellaneous throng of visitors, but the *commis voyageurs*—bagmen or commercial travellers—greatly

preponderate. These accordingly give tone to the house, which, as may be inferred, is not of the most refined kind.

These *commis voyageurs* have none of the clean, wholesome air of the English bagman, or of the sprightly dandyism of the American commercial traveller. They are generally heavily whiskered fellows, who look as if they had slept out a week at least without changing their linen, which is always of dubious whiteness. Though one would gladly avoid their society, it is quite impossible at the *Hotel du Lion d'Or*, where you get so inextricably mixed up with them, that, in spite of the greatest efforts at exclusiveness, you find yourself cheek by jowl with one or the other. You of course soon learn all about the price of wool, the demand for merinoes, and the state of the wine market. These grave topics are generally enlivened by a description *con amore* of the last dancing nudity of the French opera at Paris, the newest feminine meteor circulating in the orbit of the *Bois de Boulogne*, or of the infernal debaucheries of the *Bal Masqué*. Of politics you hear not a word. Louis Napoleon has put his firm finger on every lip; and these men, every one of whom was formerly the reddest of Red Republicans, now dare not whisper the words *liberté, fraternité, égalité*, or hum the faintest stave of the *Marsillaise*.

Their ignorance of every other country but their own is sublime, and you must not be surprised to

be asked by any of them, if you came from America by land or sea. The common Frenchman is not only ignorant of all other parts of the globe except France, but wilfully so. He is so absorbed in the admiration of *la belle France*, that he cannot admit the possibility of a rival. He therefore resolutely blots out of his map of the world every other country but his own.

During the season of travel, there is always at the *Lion d'Or* a goodly number of English tourists. These are generally of the ordinary staple of continental travellers. They are barristers, Oxford and Cambridge fellows and students let loose by vacation; clergymen who can afford to keep curates at home to do duty for them; rich old maids, in search of attention, and willing to pay for it; uneasy invalids and restless idlers striving to forget themselves; titled personages, who travel for no other reason apparently but because they are titled personages, and that an occasional continental tour is a manifestation of their rank; and thriving citizens with their families, who leave home because they can afford to, and those they think their betters do so.

The clerical portion of the English travellers was easily classified. A single glance was sufficient to distinguish the degrees of Church, whether high, low, or broad. The evangelical parson was middle-aged, round, rosy, and only severe-looking when an unfortunate Romanist distorted his vision. The



white cravat and the general sombreness of color of his dress, were the sole external indications of his profession.

The straight-cut waistcoat, the long black frock made without lappels and collar, to look as much as possible like the robe of a Catholic priest, the faintest show of white cravat, the premature baldness carefully exposed, so that it might be mistaken for a tonsure, the clean-shaved face, and the rigid movement of the whole person, indicated the Ritualist.

The broad churchman was hardly distinguishable by dress. He might be in shooting-jacket, and have his face as much hid in hair as a "whiskered Pandour," with no external indications of the priestly office. You might converse with him for hours without recognizing the profession to which he belonged. If a theological question, however, should perchance arise, you would soon discover by his liberal treatment of it that he belonged to no other than the "Broad" party of the Church.

The story is well known of the Cockney who declared the French to be the strangest people in the world because they called a cabbage a shoe (*chou*). This is a fair illustration of the judgment passed by one people upon the national peculiarities of another. A foreigner is often laughed at for habits and dress which are as much the result of the nature of his country as its language. There are undoubtedly certain peculiarities which cannot be

sustained by the logic of necessity, but which are nevertheless adhered to with the utmost tenacity; as, for example, the itch of the Scotchman, who, on going up to London, would not be cured of it, for "it reminded him of Maggie and Bonnie Dundee." The like prejudices are fair subjects for derision, and as soon as Frenchman, Englishman, or American are laughed out of such as they have, the better for them and those who may be exposed to their contact. Let the Scotchman by all means submit to a course of sulphur, the Frenchman employ a washerwoman, the Englishman sweeten his sour face with a smile, and the American swallow his saliva. It is their duty to purify, cleanse, brighten themselves, and to mend their manners. The world has a right to laugh them all into decency.

There are, however, national peculiarities which have their foundation in reason, that should be clung to tenaciously by their possessors, and respected by others. The French, apparently unconscious of their own ludicrous weaknesses and vices, are the greatest scorers of all those who differ from them. The sons and daughters of *perfidie Albion* are especially made the objects of their indiscriminate ridicule. The Englishman's fidelity to his wife, his observance of the Sunday, his ill-fitting suit of heavy broadcloth, his devotion to roast-beef and pale ale, his awkward attempts at French, his frosty manners, his moody temper, and

his sneer at all that is not British, his virtues and virtues alike are ridiculed by his Gallic neighbor.

*L'eccentricité Britannique* is a favourite topic with the scornful Frenchman, and you hear of some strange illustrations of it,—for an example: of one Englishman who blew out his brains because he was tired to death of putting on and taking off his clothes; or of another who plunged the carving-knife into his own brisket because the sirloin before  
.. him was overdone. These I accepted as humorous exaggerations, and without the remotest relation to truth, until at the *Hotel du Lion d'Or* I witnessed some specimens of British eccentricity, which seemed to bring the stories I had heard within a nearer range of probability.

A stout John Bull, of capacious stomach and full purse, alighting one day at the *Lion d'Or*, asked if Rheims was the place where champagne was made and asked nothing else. On being answered in the affirmative, he immediately pushed for the dining-room, where he took up the wine-card and began business. Pointing to the long list of the different brands of champagne, he ordered the first. Having received and drank this, he sent for the second, then for the third, and so on until he was so drunk he could neither drink nor order more. The waiter now, as he had been previously directed by the eccentric Englishman, made a mark on the wine-list with a pencil to indicate the point to which the force of swallow of the capacious guest had brought

him. On the next day, at an early hour, the Englishman resumed his day's work, beginning where he had left off, and drank bottle after bottle, until he could drink no more. The waiter again made his mark; and once more, on the third day, the Englishman having partly slept off during the night the effects of the wine, came to his work with renewed vigor. He did as he had done before, and this time finished the list, but was borne off insensible to bed. Next morning he was prepared to continue his labors, but finding by an inspection of the wine-card that his work was done, he expressed himself perfectly satisfied, paid his bill, and took the first train for Paris. He had drunk twelve bottles of champagne in three days, during which time he had not left the hotel, and hardly the dining-room, and departed from Rheims without having put a foot in its streets.

Another English oddity, a dowager Lady C——, drove up to the hotel, producing a very lively excitement within its sombre stone walls and supplying me with a distraction in that dullest of dull places. The dowager came in her own travelling carriage, one of the old-fashioned sort, with rumble behind and great square cases above and below. Such a sight had not been seen in the court-yard of the *Lion d'Or* for many a year, and the little tallow-faced clerk was in a state of unusual agitation. First from box descended courier and coachman, then from rumble two maids, and finally from

carriage itself, dowager, a little withered old woman, smothered in furs, followed by first little dog, second little dog, third, fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and lastly by meek man in white cravat and black suit. One of the maids, who dined at the *table d'hôte* by my side, became very communicative over the *vin-ordinaire*, and recounted to me the whole history of her mistress and her peregrinations. "Mylady" was the distinguished Countess C——, the mother of two grown-up sons, pillars of the British state. She was always on the move, and travelled in the state in which I had beheld her. She was never without her suite of eight puppies and the clergyman (for such was the meek gentleman in white cravat whom I had seen bringing up the rear of the long line of dogs). "Mylady" and her dogs always travelled inside, and the clergyman sometimes, when countess and puppies required priestly consolation. On other occasions he took his seat in the rumble with the maids, or with the flunkies on the box.

Not half a dozen Americans came to the hotel during the eighteen months I lived there. They were the usual money-spending Americans who had strayed by some accident from Paris, or the highways of travel, and finding neither the show nor the sensuous delights they desired, soon went away again. There was one studious young countryman of ours, who, having read in Murray's "Guide Book" that Pitt and Wilberforce had in

their youth come to Rheims to learn French, was emulous of their example, and had determined to do likewise. He had resolutely decided in Paris upon abandoning its pleasures and the society of his idle friends, and staying six months at least at Rheims. He remained just six hours, finding the place too dull, and went back by the first train.

### CHAPTER III.

The Great Cathedral—Familiarity does not beget contempt—

A Perfect Work of Art — Emotions — Unity — Magnitude

— Grand Entrances—Profusion of Statues and Ornaments

— Religious Poem — Temple of Reason — Bells—The *Beau*

*Dieu* — The Resurrection — Humor in Stone — Sodom and

Gomorrah — Architects of Middle Ages — Sturdiness of Faith

—Influence of the Cathedral: Good or Bad?

THE great Cathedral was proof against that severest test of sublimity,—familiarity. For eighteen months I saw it almost every hour of the day, and hardly less often in the night. Waked at early dawn by the sonorous chimes of its bells, my eyes, as I lay abed, first opened upon the massive structure. Though dimly visible in the gray twilight, I was fully conscious of its majestic presence. It seemed to reveal itself to my consciousness by some spiritual force, while still dark and indistinct to my obscured vision. There was a feeling akin to that of which every one is conscious on the approach of a storm, when there is not only the visible thunder-cloud to herald its coming, but a vague influence which mysteriously indicates its nearness to all, even to the blind.

In or out of bed I could not turn my eyes

toward the window without seeing the great Cathedral, for it covered the whole field of vision, above, below, and on every side. If I descended from my chamber, its gigantic presence still absorbed my view. I could neither go out or come into the hotel without passing close by its sublime front. Wherever I went, in the town or many miles out in the neighbouring country, the Cathedral, visible from any direction, was still omnipresent.

Though it thus was seen by me daily and almost hourly, it never lost its impressiveness, and I could never pass it in going or coming, whatever might be the preoccupation of my mind, without turning up my eyes to it in unaffected reverence and admiration.

It was some time before I cared to analyze the causes of the effect produced by the great structure. I was contented to look upon it and feel its influence as a work of art, perfect in itself as the statue or picture of the greatest sculptor or painter. Few buildings have ever affected me in this way, and I have looked upon many of great architectural pretension. These have excited more or less my wonder, by their magnitude, the constructive skill they displayed, and the grace of proportion or richness of adornment of their separate parts, but have seldom filled my mind with a contented consciousness of a complete oneness of beauty. This impression is made, however, by



every perfect work of art, whether it be statuary, painting, or architecture, and coming at the first glance precedes every attempt at analysis. Such an impression is produced by the Cathedral at Rheims upon all who have the least sympathy with art, and is quite independent of a knowledge of its technicalities. I am sure that one who could not distinguish by name the nave from the spire, would be unable to resist the impressive influence of this great work.

Those who have studied architecture say that the Cathedral at Rheims is remarkable above all other structures for its unity. They declare that it must have arisen out of the conception of some single mind of genius. One in his enthusiasm calls it "petrified music." This harmony of parts and proportions in so large a structure is indeed marvelous, and is undoubtedly one of the essential causes of its effect as a work of art.

The magnitude of the Cathedral is remarked by the passing observer, not so much from the impression it makes from its own massiveness, as from the littleness to which every object exposed to its contrast is reduced. The whole length of the building from the steps in front to the last exterior buttress of the apse in the rear, is about six hundred feet. It is three times as long as the wide front of the Astor House; and three Trinity Churches, placed in a line one after another, would not extend so far as the length of the Cathedral.

Three streets open opposite to each of its great sides, and these thus face as many blocks of buildings.

Some critics have declared that the Cathedral is disproportionately narrow, but this, if a defect, is only observable in the interior. Like most others of continental Europe, it has never reached its due altitude of spire; but the two towers nearly three hundred feet high which crown the front, though not completed, are, with their colossal columns reduced by height and justness of proportion, models of aerial grace.

The grand entrance of the church is universally conceded to be the finest in the world. It is composed of three lofty arched porches, each at least a hundred feet high, and so deep and spacious that many hundred people might easily find refuge within them without entering the Cathedral.

These porches are crowded so thick with figures and decorations, as, in fact, is almost every other part of the Cathedral, that the building seems built of statues, flowers, and ornaments. I could only compare this abounding sculpture to those curious specimens of Chinese ivory carving, where the figures are so crowded together that it is impossible to discover the ground from which they have been deftly cut. One cannot sufficiently admire the skill and taste by which these innumerable statues and ornaments have been sculptured, and adjusted in harmony with the lines and proportions of the great

Cathedral. When it is viewed in the twilight of the morning or evening, or at a distance so that the forms of the figures cannot be distinctly seen, their lines and varying shades so harmonize with each other and the immense structure, that the Cathedral loses nothing of its graceful beauty. The whole building assumes in the obscurity of uncertain light or remoteness, a vague massiveness of fretted ornament and intricate tracery. Some seven hundred statues can be counted in the three porches alone, five hundred of which are little less large than life, and the rest colossal. All the niches are filled with them: they are crouching under the capitals; they line the successive arches of the porch; they are climbing thick upon all the columns, and are standing in close array along the base. There is besides a profusion of flowers, leaves, and ornaments of all kinds. "It is a religious poem carved out by the sculptor," says Baron Taylor; "it is an animated book which relates in action the legends of saints; episodes from the Old and New Testament, and subjects taken from the history of Rheims."

There are statues of saints, bishops, angels, prophets, kings, queens, and men and women of all degrees and condition. The whole history of Adam and Eve is recorded in thirty-eight bass-reliefs. On the lintels of the doors, there is given in stone a full account of the conversion of Clovis, the first king of France. He is there, just after the

battle of Tolbiac, beseeching Saint Waast to instruct him in the knowledge of the true God; again, he is saying his catechism to Saint Remi; thirdly, he is on his knees before him, demanding to be baptized; and finally he is up to his waist in a tub of holy water, receiving what he had asked for.

Among the colossal statues there are Moses, Jonas, Elias, Habakkuk, Saint John, and Saint Remi. Under one arch there is a representation, in all its details, of the Passion of our Saviour. Under another there is a representation of paradise and hell; and under a third all the virtues, illustrated by Solomon, David singing, Saint Louis, Saint Cecilia, Noah planting vines, and Saint Bernard preaching. Above all these, crowning the porch, are groups of gigantic figures representing the triumph of the Virgin, the Crucifixion of our Saviour, and the Exaltation of the Cross. These groups are considered marvels of art for the thirteenth century.

The flowers which crown the columns of the porch are said to be as faithful and complete a rendering of the whole *flora* of Rheims as Linnæus himself could have described.

Many of these statues and ornaments have been roughly handled by time and the revolutionists of 1789, who, after having in vain attempted to demolish the Cathedral, finally inscribed upon its sacred front: "*Temple de Raison. Le peuple Français reconnaît l'Être Suprême et l'immortalité de l'âme.*" "Temple of Reason. The French people

acknowledge the Supreme Being and the immortality of the soul.”\*

Above the porch, even to the summits of the graceful towers, there is a continued succession of statues, bass-reliefs, flowers, and architectural ornaments. There is the magnificent circular window, called by the French *la rosace*, over the middle of the three entrances. Its immense size, with a diameter of at least fifty feet; the intricate yet orderly interweaving of its ogives flowing together in graceful and unchecked continuity; the rich fretting of its frame, and its perfect harmony of proportion and design, with the noble front in which it is set, almost justify the audacious conception of the architect who designed it as a symbol of eternity, “the eye of invisible Divinity.” On either side of this great circular window rise two turrets. In their niches, formed by isolated columns, are colossal statues of the Virgin and of three of the Apostles.

Above the *rosace* is a sculptured group representing the combat of David and Goliath, and around its border there is a host of biblical figures. Then just above is a moulded cornice indicating the summit of the body of the structure. From this there arises a gallery of double ogives, which from below looks like a mere border of moulding, but which is

\* The inscription at present is: “Deo Optimo Maximo sub invocatione beatæ Mariæ Virginis Deiparæ templum seculo XIII. reedificatum.”

in fact a strong stone balustrade inclosing a wide parapet, to which on Palm Sunday the whole clerical force of the Cathedral ascend and chant the *Gloria in excelsis* and the *Laus Deo*. The gallery has in consequence obtained the popular name of the Gloria.

Above the gallery, within seven compartments formed by light open columns which terminate in turrets, there are forty-nine great statues representing the conversion and baptism of Clovis. These are again surmounted by forty-two other colossal statues, which for a long time were received as a faithful representation of the monarchs of France, but are now supposed to be the kings of Judah. In fact, the archaeologists seem as little agreed about the interpretation of much of the statuesque writing of the Cathedral as of the hieroglyphics on the monuments of Egypt.

Above the gallery, at either end, rise the towers whose graceful columns are seen miles away, cutting, but not intercepting, the sky, for each one is isolated, and the air and light pass freely through the whole structure. Within these towers are the bells, of which no one enters Rheims without becoming immediately conscious. They ring out the hours, and each of the quarters and halves. They ring up the people to work at early dawn, and ring them home at sunset. They ring at every marriage, and ring at every death, when there is money enough to pay for their purchasable joy or grief.

The great thunderer, *Le gros Bourdon*, tells its

own history in these words: "I am Charlotte, weighing twenty-three thousand (lbs.), named by Monseigneur the most illustrious Charles Cardinal of Lorraine, Archbishop and Duke of Rheims, first peer of France, and the most illustrious Lady Renée of Lorraine, Abbess of Saint Peter of the said Rheims, his sister. Pierre Deschamps, native of Rheims, made me." It was cast in 1570. It has a diameter of about eight feet, and the thickness of a foot. As for the power of its clapper, it fills not only the whole of Rheims with its voice when it speaks, but may be heard at a distance of a league or more from the Cathedral.

When the revolutionists of 1790 decreed in their wisdom that one bell was enough for any church, "Charlotte" was deprived of her companions. These were melted down at the mint. They have, however, since been replaced by others, and the bell choir has now its full complement of loud-voiced performers.

The side entrances are hardly less grandiose and rich in sculpture than the porches in front. It is impossible to enumerate, much less to describe, the multifarious images and ornaments of all kinds, which embarrass with their wealth every observer, and fatigue even the patient scrutiny of the antiquary.

No good Catholic comes to Rheims without doing reverence to what its people call their *Beau Dieu*, a colossal statue of our Saviour, whose benign face

smiles a sweet welcome to all who pass or enter the northern porch of the transept. The curious and irreverent Protestant will be more attracted, probably, by the other sculpture of the same porch. This is a representation of the last judgment. The trumpet has sounded, and Christ, seated upon his throne, is pronouncing the verdict of perpetual happiness or misery upon the good and bad, as they are brought up by his administering angels. Below our Saviour sitting in judgment are two long rows, each extending to the full width of the great entrance, of the dead rising from their tombs. The artist, notwithstanding the gravity of his subject, has not been able to resist its humorous suggestions, and nothing can be more ludicrous, and natural too, than the expressions of wonder on the faces of the various figures, as they get out of their beds of stone. They are represented in every variety of attitude: some as if pushing off the lids of their tombs, and peering through the opening thus made; some with their heads just popping above the edges; some in a sitting posture; some with one leg out; some springing into the air, and others who have escaped entirely are seen running for their lives. The figures, though small, are very expressive. Surprise is the predominant expression, but its degrees are marked with wonderful distinctness. Some are rubbing their eyes, as if only half-awake to the consciousness of the great change; some, bewildered by it, and as if doubtful of the result, are hesitating to leave their



abodes of stone to which they have been so long accustomed ; some are leaping out, in a state of frantic excitement ; and others are hastening away, as if fearful of being subjected to another imprisonment.

Below this comical representation of the Resurrection, there is a line of more serious sculpture. An angel is separating the good from the bad. The former, a cheerful band of popes, bishops, kings, and others, are following with readiness their saintly guide, who is leading them up to our Saviour. The latter, chained together, are being dragged by an ugly demon, with a mouth extending from ear to ear, to the devil, who is stirring up a caldron, licked vigorously by flames and filled with bubbling babies. These infants are the unbaptized, of whose skulls, according to Saint Augustine, hell is paved. Among the sinners destined to the caldron, are some in mitres and priestly robes. I thought it a wonderful stretch of liberal opinion on the part of the clergy, that they should have condemned some of their own sacred body. A shrewd clerical friend, however, suggested that it was probable that the ecclesiastics who built the church were thus taking sweet revenge upon some theological faction opposed to their own.

In addition to these strange illustrations of religious comedy and tragedy, there is a representation on the same porch of the virtues and vices personified. Among the latter there is an exhibition of monstrosities more monstrous than those of Sodom

and Gomorrah. The Chapter of the Cathedral, not many years ago, in concession to the modern sense of decency, ordered these figures to be defaced, but not sufficiently to mask the original design. They remain a curious illustration of the plain speaking of a past age.

The interior of the Cathedral never made an impression upon me commensurate with the grandeur of the exterior; but the general tone of vastness has been well preserved by a due harmony between fitness and space. The windows, by a skillful arrangement, have been made to transmit the light in such a way that it shines brightly within the sanctuary where it is wanted, but glimmers obscurely everywhere else, producing that dim, religious atmosphere which accords so well with the sentiment of the worshipper.

The decorations of the interior are far less profuse than those of the exterior, but the capitals of the great pillars are adorned with rich and elaborate sculptures of flowers and leaves of all kinds, and animals in every possible posture.

The pictures are few and not remarkable, although it is claimed that there is a Titian among them, which I found it difficult to believe. Most of the stained glass is modern, but that filling the great circular window glows with a great variety of brilliant colors harmoniously arranged.

The foundation of the present Cathedral was laid in 1212, about six and a half centuries ago. Two

Christian churches had already stood on the same site. The first was constructed in the year 401, of the stones of the ancient citadel, in whose place it was substituted. The inhabitants remonstrated with the Archbishop for demolishing their means of defence. "Begone, cowards!" answered the ecclesiastic of sturdy faith. "God will be our protector." Hence the motto of the city's arms: "*Sub Custodia Cæli*." This first church was razed to make way for a second, built in the year 822. This having been burned to the ground, the present edifice was commenced in the year 1212.

Albéric de Humbert was at that time Archbishop of Rheims, and he resolved upon founding a monument worthy of the Church then in the fullness of its might. He called to his aid an architect of renown, Robert de Courcy. Having exposed to him his views, the artist was so startled by their grandeur that he asked where the means could be found for executing a work so great as was contemplated, and added that, if commenced, it could never be finished for want of money and hands. "Begin," replied the Archbishop. "God and man will aid us." The architect, impelled by the force of faith of the great priest, did begin. In thirty years after the first stone was laid, the *Te Deum* was chanted within the walls of the present Cathedral, that great monument which could have been raised only by ecclesiastical power, inspired by faith.

The Cathedral has defied time, though rudely shaken by the profane hands of revolutionary iconoclasts, and left to moulder by the neglect of an irreverent age. The government of Louis Napoleon, however, by a liberal grant of money for the restoration of all the great monuments of France, is fast reinstating the great church in its early glory.

A friend, an intelligent and liberal clergyman of the English Church, after a morning's inspection of the Cathedral, asked me somewhat abruptly, as if his mind had been disturbed by an uneasy doubt, whether I thought "the influence of this great ecclesiastical monument had been for good or bad?"

"As 'a thing of beauty is a joy for ever,' I could not doubt," I said, "its refining influence as a work of art; of its religious power I was equally confident, for it evidently was one of those great attractive forces by which the faithful are drawn and kept within the fold of the Church, and the coherency of that great body is maintained; as for its good moral effect, that might be doubted, if it were true, as is generally stated, that Rheims is one of the most corrupt cities in the world."

## CHAPTER IV.

The Great Cathedral the Scene of Great Events—Baptism of Clovis by Saint Remi—A Great Priest of the Olden Time—The Miracle of the Ampulla—Heretical Interpretation—Worship of Bare Bones—The Sacred Oil a Power in the Church—Joan of Arc at Rheims—Royal Anointing—The Revolutionists and the Holy Oil.

THE Cathedral at Rheims has been the scene of some great events in the history of France. It was here where Clovis, the first Christian king was baptized by St. Remi, who had already, aided by Queen Clotilde, his first disciple, converted him to the new and true faith.

“The way from the hostelry of the king was prepared,” says Feodoard, a monkish chronicler of the Middle Ages. “The streets on both sides were hung with tapestry, the church adorned, and the baptistery perfumed with balms and other odors, so that, with the grace of God, the people thought that they were regaled with the sweet smells and delights of a paradise. Then the holy bishop, preceded by his clergy, bearing the Book of the Evangelists, the crosses and the litanies, proceeded to the baptistery, holding the king by the hand, and followed by the queen and the people. But it is

said that by the way the king asked the bishop if this ceremony was the kingdom of God which he had promised him. 'No,' said the bishop; 'but it is the beginning and the entrance of the way by which we are to arrive there.' When they had reached the baptistery, the clerk, who carried the holy oil, could not approach in consequence of the great crowd which kept him back. If, after the sanctification of the font, there was a want of oil, it was by the will of God.

"But the holy bishop, raising his eyes toward heaven, prayed secretly and in tears. And behold, incontinently, a dove, as white as snow, presented itself, carrying in its bill an *ampulla* (phial) full of of holy oil sent from heaven; of which the odor was so admirable, and the sweetness so ineffable, that not one of those present had ever smelt the like. The bishop took this *ampulla*, and after he had sprinkled some of the holy oil upon the baptismal water, the dove vanished.

"The king, moved by so great a miracle, and full of joy, renounced incontinently the pomps and works of the devil, and demanded baptism of the bishop. When he had entered the font of eternal life, the venerable bishop said to him roundly and eloquently, *Mitis depone colla, Sicamber; adora quod incendisti, incende quod adorasti*. 'Bend thy head humbly, Sicamber; adore what thou hast burned, burn what thou hast adored.'

"Alboffede and Lendelhilde, sisters of the king,

were also baptized, with three thousand men of the host of the French, without counting the women and little children. And we may well believe that on this day the holy angels were greatly rejoiced in heaven, as devout men received a great joy on earth."

Saint Remi was a man of genius. He was one of those rare men gifted with the power of mastery over his fellows. "He was grave of face, venerable in person," says an old chronicler, "redoubtable by his severity, amiable from his benignity. It is true that the austerity of his face seemed menacing, but the serenity of his heart was soothing; so that to the pious and good he appeared in visage a Saint Peter; while, on the other hand, to ill-livers he had the look of a Saint Paul. He neglected repose, he rejected ease, he invited labor, he bore contempt with patience, he cared not for honor, he was poor in purse, rich in conscience; humble and modest with all his merits, severe and grave toward vice. And the Lord was not willing that such a light should be put under a bushel, but placing it above the lamp, caused it to burn, with the fire of divine charity, and to illumine the Church with the pure flames of most excellent virtue."

Saint Remi occupied the see of Rheims seventy-four years, and to his wise administration may be traced the foundation of the ecclesiastical power of the "holy city," as to his personal influence is due the consolidation of the French people into a na-

tion. Clearly discerning the political subtlety, and appreciating the military skill of the barbarian leader, Sicamber, he determined to bend him to his views, and divert his undoubted capacity and powerful influence from opposition to the Church to its support. He succeeded by first converting the queen, through whose gentle influence the barbarian monarch was persuaded to listen to the teaching of the Christian Apostle. The rude Sicamber became a docile disciple, but may be supposed to have had still some lingering doubts of the new religion until the day of his baptism, when the great miracle of the dove descending with the holy oil from heaven confirmed his belief, and fixed him a devout convert to the true faith.

The Protestant, who is not bound to believe in any miracles since those of our Saviour, may see, in this affair of the dove and the sacred oil, merely an ingenious contrivance to impose upon the credulous mind of a barbarian. Supposing a fraud,—call it pious, or what you may,—it is not difficult for an heretical mind to conceive how it may have been executed. It might have been easy to train a tame pigeon to come down to the baptismal font. No other means need to have been used than that so ingeniously devised by the present Emperor of France to make the imperial eagle, bought of a showman in London, to alight upon him when he made the abortive attempt to rule over France without asking leave of the French by a *plebiscite*.



Louis Napoleon, as is well known, had trained the bird to feed from his shoulder, upon which there was put its daily rations of raw beef and hard egg.

Such an explanation of the so-called miracle, would seem to the Protestant mind more rational than the supposition that all the laws of nature had been suddenly abolished for the sake of sending to the impatient priest, direct from heaven, a phial of Venetian glass, filled with hog's lard and scented with bergamot.

It was, however, let Protestants sneer and doubt as they may, a genuine miracle according to the testimony of all good Catholics. Such it was believed to be at the time, and such it has been believed to be ever since.

Saint Remi was undoubtedly a very great man. He ruled the king, who yielded willingly to his domination, and bestowed upon him every possible favor. Clovis gave his own niece in marriage to Saint Remi's near relative, Arnould, whom he created Count of Rheims. He was not only a royal but a popular favorite, and the impression that he made was great and abiding. The present Cathedral, built eight hundred years after his death, is, as it were, a memorial of his life and his eulogy in stone. Every incident of his career is there indelibly inscribed, and he and his miraculous pigeon are reproduced a hundred times in sculpture and painting. At the present day, in this nineteenth century, fifteen hundred years at least since he lived,

he is worshipped not only by the inhabitants of Rheims, but by all the good Catholics of France in his bare bones. These, of questionable authenticity, are preserved with pious care, and are supposed to be possessed of miraculous power, which is tested year after year by thousands with a result apparently satisfactory to all.

Saint Remi was certainly a very great man, and merited the favor of the king, the love and honor of his flock, and the veneration of all future ages. If, as Protestants pretend, the miracle of the dove and holy oil was no miracle at all, how humiliating it would be to human nature to think that, if it had not been for a vulgar juggler's trick, the great Christian Apostle of France might have preached in vain and been long since forgotten.

Whatever may have been its real origin, the supposed heaven-sent ampulla of oil has been a power in the state, and has controlled some of the great political as well as religious events which form the history of France. The miraculous unguent was supposed to be possessed of a force of unction which endowed the kings of France, in their consecration, with a right more divine than the divine right of all other kings. "Our king is consecrated," says a chronicler of the reign of Louis VII., "with an oil brought by a dove from heaven to the baptism of King Clovis, and prepared by the hands of angels by divine virtue, while the other kings of Christendom are conse-

crated only with a material and common oil. So that in fact the kings of France are more worthy and noble than all the other kings of the world."

It was the oil of divine origin which quickened the devout heroism of the Maid of Orleans, and impelled her to clear, by her valiant arm, the road to Rheims. After the brilliant siege of Orleans, and when the English were stunned with the blow, she declared for an immediate march to the "sacred city," with Charles VII., that he might be anointed king with the sacred oil. The English had made a great mistake, when by their early victories they might have crowned their young Henry VI. at Rheims, in neglecting to perform an act of such vital importance to their cause. Joan of Arc, by her valor at Orleans, had now the opportunity of anticipating the enemy, and this she determined to do.

Her proposition was deemed rash by the leaders of the French army. Not a voice was for her. The politicians and the strong heads of the council smiled; they were for going slowly and surely, that is to say, that the English might have time to resume their courage. These counsellors all gave interested opinions. The Duke of Alençon was for marching to Normandy, to reconquer Alençon, and others this or that way, as their interests prompted.

The advice of the ardent Maid was not heeded until again victorious at Patay; but even now ob-

jections were urged, and on arriving before Troyes obstacles, which seemed insurmountable, presented themselves, and gave a momentary triumph to the party of temporizers. The king had no artillery or provisions.

"We can take the town in three days," declared the resolute Joan of Arc.

"We would readily wait six," said the Chancellor, "if we were sure of the truth of what you say."

"Six! you shall be there to-morrow" rejoined the Maid.

The town was taken, and Joan of Arc became still more urgent for an immediate march to Rheims.

The march began, Joan of Arc, "armed at all points," leading the way and hastening on the king with unceasing diligence. On arriving at Rheims, the Maid, who entered the city with the king and his people, was greatly regarded; and the Dukes of Bar and of Lorraine, and the Lord of Commercy, accompanied by a goodly array of warriors, came and offered their services to her.

On the next day, which was Sunday, it was determined that the consecration should take place. During the night preparations were made with such diligence that everything, marvelous to say, was ready in the morning. As the Abbé of St. Remi, its guardian, is not accustomed to deliver the sacred ampulla, except with a certain form and

ceremony, the king sent the lord of Rais, mareschal of France, the lord of Boussac, also mareschal of France, the lord of Greville, the master of the Bowmen, and the lord of Culant, the high admiral of France, to get it. After having taken the usual oath that they would conduct the holy ampulla in safety to the church and back again to the abbey, the Abbé, clothed in all his ecclesiastical robes, accompanied them, bearing it to the door of the Cathedral. Here the Archbishop, with his canons, received the ampulla, and taking it within the great church laid it upon the high altar.

Charles VII. now came clothed in the proper robes for the service, and was anointed and consecrated king of France. The Maid of Orleans was by his side, holding her standard in her hand. "She was in fact," says the old chronicler, whose authentic record is the basis of this description, "the cause of this consecration, and of the great assemblage. When the sacred ampulla had been borne away to be taken back again to the abbey of Saint Remi, all who saw the Maid embrace the legs of the kneeling king and kiss his foot, weeping hot tears, were moved to pity. She incited many to weep as she said: 'Gentle king, now the will of God is done, who caused you to come to Rheims to receive your consecration, and thereby show that you are the true king to whom the kingdom should belong.'"

Thus was accomplished one of the most impor-

tant events in the history of France, and, as has been seen, the little phial of scented oil was not the least effective of its causes. Forty-eight royal personages, kings with their queens, have been consecrated at the Cathedral of Rheims. Among them were Francis I., Charles IX., Louis XIV., Louis XVI., and Charles X. It is recorded of Louis XVI., that on the crown being placed on his head, he remarked, *Elle me gêne* ; “ It feels uneasy.” The poor monarch was soon relieved of its uncomfortable weight, by what the surgeons call a capital operation.

The mode of applying the oil is as follows : The archbishop opens “ respectfully ” the sacred ampulla, plunges into it a golden needle, and mixes the oil that adheres on withdrawing it with other oil, which is placed in a chalice on the altar. With his finger he mixes the two as intimately as possible, and when it is thus prepared he opens the vestment of the king. He now kneels upon the same cushion as the king while the *Kyrie Eleison* is being chanted. After the Litany, the Archbishop arises, and, holding the cross with his left hand, says over the king some Latin words, which may be thus translated : “ Deign to choose this thy servant (X. or Y.) for king ; we beseech thee to hear us, O Lord. Deign to bless, elevate, and preserve him ; we beseech thee to hear us, O Lord. Deign to lead him to the height of the kingdom ; we beseech thee to hear us, O Lord.”

When certain other litanies and prayers have been said, the archbishop proceeds to the anointing. He first anoints the head of the king, secondly his breast, thirdly between his shoulders, fourthly on the shoulders, and fifthly at the bend of the elbows. At each application the archbishop says: "I anoint thee king, with holy oil, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." The clergy at the same time chant over and over again the verse of the psalm beginning with, "*Unxerunt Salomonem.*" After the ceremony is over the king's shirt, deemed too holy for use, is burnt.

The sacredness of the ampulla did not save it from the profane hands of the revolutionary fanatics of 1790, one of whom wrested it from the grasp of the priesthood and dashed it into pieces at the base of Louis XV.'s statue in the Place Royale. There was, however, a pious and loyal observer, who was fortunately at hand, and as soon as the day closed he issued out from his hiding-place and carefully collected the scattered fragments of the phial, and scraped up every remnant of the holy ointment. These he preserved with devout care until the fury of the Revolution had passed, when he delivered them up to the church. By a second miracle, hardly less potent than the first, the quantity of the oil had not been sensibly diminished by its scattering on the pavement, and it is now reverently guarded, though in a new bottle, for future use.

Charles X. was the first and last of the French sovereigns to be consecrated with the oil that had been profaned by the rude hands of the revolutionists, and it may be reasonably inferred, considering his unfortunate reign and forced exit from France, that the oil had lost its ancient virtues by its contact with irreverent republicanism.

"The wretch," we are gravely told, "who was guilty of the profanation of destroying the sacred ampulla, died on the next day in frightful agonies."



## CHAPTER V.

Church of Saint Remi — Specimen of Early Art — A Good Study—Tomb of Saint Remi — Holy Bones—Skeptical Osteology — Fair of Saint Remi—Jugglery inside of Church—Jugglery outside.

**T**HERE is another great church at Rheims—Saint Remi. Many students of architecture affect to admire it more than the Cathedral. For them it has an historical interest, apart from the impression it may make, as a work of art, upon the unlearned observer. The Church of Saint Remi, as it exists at present, was built in 1041, in the early part of the eleventh century, about two hundred years before the Cathedral.

As a specimen of earlier Christian art, Saint Remi has certainly an interest which cannot be claimed for its great rival. Though its original purity has been affected by subsequent changes and additions, it still presents many features, in all their native boldness, of the transition period, when the simple massiveness of Roman construction was yet comparatively unbroken by the rich embroidery of Oriental art. Upon this sturdy stock of original growth there have been, however, successively

engrafted various shoots of the Romano-Byzantine, the flamboyant, and Greek styles, with their respective beauties of efflorescence. The church thus, in its single edifice, presents a complete school of ecclesiastical architecture, worthy of the resort of every curious student.

Various chapels and churches had been already built upon the same site, before the construction of the present church. The first was founded at the time of the conversion of Gaul to Christianity. The body of the great French Apostle, Saint Remi, was buried within its walls in the year 545, and it became in consequence the resort of pious pilgrims from wherever the Cross was raised. Queen Clotilde, grateful to her saintly master who had converted her and her royal husband Clovis to Christianity, endowed the church with liberal gifts. In the year 633 this first chapel was reconstructed with more vast proportions; but although at the time it was deemed a marvel of architecture, it had hardly existed two centuries when its walls on all sides began to open, and threaten to fall. Toward the close of the eighth century, it was accordingly demolished, and a new structure, still more vast, erected upon its ruins. This proved even less vigorous than its predecessor, and stood but a hundred and fifty years. The foundations of the present building were then laid, and so deep and broad that "no one," records a contemporary chronicler, "dare promise himself a life long enough to see the completion of the church."

This was a period of sturdy religious faith whose earnest and vigorous expression still forcibly impress us in the massive simplicity and the deep solemnity, grave even to sadness, of the sacred structure.

The two towers flanking the *façade*, with their massive squareness and broad arches, are fine specimens of Roman architecture, as are the mighty buttresses which support the body of the building on either side. The porch, of the sharp ogival style, is of a date at least a century later than the towers. The side doors are still less old, and above the principal one will be observed one of those lofty ogival windows, composed of three sections, the central of which rises above the two others. This was a favorite disposition in the thirteenth century, and is supposed to symbolize the Trinity.

The *façade* of the right transept is entirely of the flamboyant style, and was executed in the fifteenth century. Its colossal sculpture of the Assumption of the Virgin is in every respect analogous in treatment to that of the same subject on the Cathedral, and is probably by the same artist.

The interior of Saint Remi, more vast than that of the Cathedral, is wonderfully impressive. Its grandeur and harmony, subduing all other emotions, elevate the mind at once to a sublime and tranquil contemplation. The ordinary observer will not remark any difference in the parts; he will hardly regret his want of power to analyze the work. He

is content with the sense of solemn beauty produced by space artfully subjected to grace and proportion.

The student of architecture will discover the various styles of different eras, but is forced to acknowledge the wonderful skill of the successive artists living centuries apart, who, while giving definite expression each to the artistic sentiment of his day, have succeeded in harmonizing their work.

The triple row of arches, rising one above the other, and the galleries, which surround the interior, and seem to form as it were a church within a church, strike the spectator as the perfection of architectural art. The marble columns, which are grouped around the central part of the nave, are Roman, and belonged to the prætorian palace which stood formerly near the site of the church. Their perfectness of proportion and beauty of workmanship prove them to be examples of ancient art of the purest era. The deep Gothic arches they support intersect each other with a graceful mystery of involution which surprises and delights the eye.

The chief interest of the Church of Saint Remi, to the inhabitants of Rheims, consists in its possession of the supposed bones of their patron saint. These precious relics are contained within a richly chased case of silver-gilt, which is kept ordinarily shut up in the tomb of Saint Remi. This tomb is an elaborate structure placed behind the high altar of the church. Its body is in the form of a sarcophagus, around which are statues, of almost the

size of life, of the famous counts of Champagne, represented in their double capacity of warriors and bishops, armed and mitred. At the door of the tomb is a statue of Saint Remi himself, in his archiepiscopal robes, with eyes upturned in pious ecstasy towards the dove descending with the ampulla of miraculous origin. In a niche by his side, within a casket of gold, there is kept the genuine oil as received from heaven, though now in a glass phial of terrestrial manufacture, but of celestial pattern.

The tomb is of white marble, and though somewhat too crowded with figures, and oppressed with ornament, is a creditable work of modern art. It was raised, within the last few years, by the city of Rheims, in concession to the public veneration for the remains of the great Saint Remi.

The revolutionary destructives, in the muck they ran against all that was venerable, knocked the ancient tomb of the revered saint to pieces, and scattered his bones. Here, however, as in the case of the broken ampulla, there was a pious guardian conveniently at hand, who gathered up the remains and buried them, by night, in the public cemetery. When the people forsook their "temple of reason," and returned once more to their ancient idols, the bones of Saint Remi were brought back and restored to their sacred resting-place.

The sceptics, however, persist in declaring—and I have the highest surgical authority for the fact—that by some means or other the bones of the great

Saint Remi got so mixed up in the common burial-place with those of others, that his skeleton came back with the right thigh-bone of one of his unknown and possibly unshrived neighbours. If Saint Remi had had the good luck to leave his right instead of his left leg, all would have been well, and there might have been no scandal raised by the unbelieving Cuviers of the day, upon discovering that the skeleton was possessed of two right thigh bones. This scientific fact, however, has been generally rejected as impertinent, and has had no sensible effect in diminishing the miraculous power of the bones, or the public faith in it. The sacred tomb still attracts daily crowds of worshippers, and there is not a poor mother in Rheims, whose baby is in the agony of its first tooth, who does not invoke the interposition in favour of Saint Remi, by spending a sou for a sputtering bit of grease to be burnt before his tomb, which is kept in constant illumination by votive candles of all kinds, from the pauper's miserable dip to the rich man's brilliant wax.

During the Fair of Saint Remi, which begins on the day of that saint and continues for several weeks, a constant service is kept going day and evening in the church. The silver-gilt case containing the bones is taken out of the marble tomb, and brought before the altar, where it is placed under a gay canopy of plumes and banners within sight of the people, and the reach of the officiating priests.

Thousands of devout worshippers throng the church every day. Mass after mass is said, and the long line of *quêteurs*, "beggars," headed by the *Suisse* (beadle) in glorious apparel of cocked-hat and red plush breeches, and robed priest, and terminated by chorister boys, keep busy poking their velvet pouches under every one's nose, and conjuring the stray sous out of each pocket. In the mean time the devout portion of the people, generally poor women in their best and brightest caps, shabby and decrepit men, and little smiling children, keep passing in continuous procession in front of the silver-gilt box. As each one reaches the priest, who is the operator of the day, the devotee hands him something. This—either a ring, a locket, a cross, a little delf-figure of the Virgin or of our Saviour, a pocket handkerchief or a baby's clout—is taken by the priest, who quickly applies it to the silver-gilt case and then returns it to its owner, muttering all the while some Latin prayer or other.

The poor people are evidently in earnest, and it is truly affecting to witness the ardor with which they press forward to obtain the holy touch, and the warmth of affection with which they handle, hug, and kiss the wretched trinkets and bits of rag when once consecrated by it. The operating priest, if, as may be suspected, he has not his heart in his business, is still more to be pitied than his honest but credulous flock. It is not edifying to behold a

venerable man, half a century old, deeply versed in the humanities, thus sweating hour after hour at this work of vulgar quackery.

I hurried from the church to seek relief in the more honest exhibition on the outside, where the fair was in full swing. Here the boy was getting a solid piece of gingerbread for his sou, and the poor men and women also something substantial for their hard-earned money. There were charlatans and jugglers here, too, but their pretensions were not so great as those within the church, and I observed that the circulating hat evoked but a scanty supply of coppers.



## CHAPTER VI.

Champagne Wine — Export to the World — To the United States — The Manufacturers — Genuine Wine — Consular Seal—History of Brands — Comparative Excellence of Champagnes — The Widow Clicquot — Russian Invasion of her Cellars—A Shrewd *Commis Voyageur*—Fictitious Brands.

MANY have doubtless noticed the word RHEIMS printed conspicuously on the labels of a bottle of *Clicquot* or *Consular Seal*, or upon any other of the numerous but less noted brands of champagne wine. It is found upon most, if not all, bottles of champagne, whether real or false, for each producer of the former is eager to affirm the fact, as every artificer of the latter to circulate the falsehood, that his wine emanates from Rheims, the chief source of the genuine product. Rheims is thus known by name, at least to all wine drinkers, and is more or less familiar to the eye of every American, for the champagne bottle, though by no means always filled with genuine wine, circulates more freely in this than any other country.

Of the thirteen millions of bottles sent annually to market from Rheims and neighbouring places, the United States takes at least two millions. England,

Russia, and the East Indies, receive each about the same quantity, and form with the United States the four chief consumers. France may rank next; then Germany, Holland, Belgium, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Africa.

All the chief manufacturers of champagne contribute to the supply of the United States. H. Piper and Co., whose wine is so well known in our country under the brand of Heidsieck (Piper), are by far the largest exporters. They send to the United States about forty thousand dozen annually. G. M. Mumm & Co. and Charles Heidsieck & Co., export each twelve thousand; Krug & Co., eleven thousand; Heidsieck & Co., ten thousand; De St. Marceaux & Co., eight thousand; L. Roederer, Moët & Chandon, and Jules Mumm & Co., each about seven thousand; and Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin, some five thousand dozen. Other houses of less note contribute, in proportion to their importance, to make up the large quantity consumed in the United States.

The wine thus exported may be presumed to be, for the most part, genuine. The manufacturer of repute would hardly venture to sell any other. Not a few producers, however, of less note, are accused of making their so-called champagne wine of a grape that never ripened on the hills of Rheims or of its neighbourhood.

Though it may be conceded that most of the champagne directly imported into this country from

Rheims and the other towns of the same department (Marne) is genuine, it can be by no means allowed that it is of the highest quality of wine. I have in fact the testimony of all the chief exporters of champagne, to prove that the wine they send to the United States, though "good and wholesome," is of inferior quality to that generally sent elsewhere, and always to that kept at home. I had not been long in Rheims before I became entirely convinced of the fact. Brought by my official duties into direct and constant association with the wine manufacturers, and partaking of their hospitality, I had frequent occasion to test, at their convivial tables, the quality of their champagne. I had hardly turned off the first glass, when I remarked a flavor of which my palate, though not unused to the best of Heidsieck, Mumm, and Moët and Chandon, in America, had been hitherto unconscious. It was the first time in my life that I had enjoyed a glass of champagne, as wine. Before, I had drunk it as a not unpleasant beverage, being palatable from its sweetness and effervescence, and exhilarating in its effect. I could not distinguish the wine of one brand from that of another; and all, Heidsieck, Mumm, Moët & Chandon, Clicquot, and Roederer, seemed to me to have been brewed in the same vat, of the same proportions of syrup, brandy, and soda-water.

I now found, instead of tossing off my glass and swallowing its contents with a gulp, as I had been

wont to do in order to secure the evanescent sparkle and hasten the expected exhilaration, that the wine trickled slowly, drop by drop, over the gratified palate. My taste had recognized, for the first time in a glass of champagne, the flavor of a fine wine, and was lingering in the enjoyment of its mellow richness. My host caught the expression of my satisfaction, and said: "You don't get such wine in America ;" adding, with a roguish twinkle of his eye, "we keep that for ourselves and friends."

It is true that I had never tasted such wine in America, but I was determined that my friends and I should be able thenceforth to do so. I accordingly selected at once, from the private stocks of the chief manufacturers of Rheims, various samples of their best wines, and sent them to some of my friends of the New York Union Club. They, it must be said in justice to their connoisseurship, chose the wine of the great vintage of 1858, which was most esteemed at Rheims. This is the champagne known as the "Consular Seal," and is such wine as the manufacturers generally "keep for themselves and friends."

Though Rheims is the chief seat of the champagne wine-trade, Epernay, Chalons sur Ay, and Mareuil sur Ay, all within the same department, are more or less engaged in it. The most extensive manufacturers and merchants are Moët and Chandon, who are said to dispose each year of nearly two millions of bottles. They carry on their business at Eper-

nay, where they have a palatial establishment above ground, and below great cellars hewn out of the solid chalk which underlies the thin soil of all that portion of the country that produces the champagne grape. These are divided into seven vast compartments, which contain five subterranean passages, ten large and a hundred and seventeen small cellars, in which are arranged in order two millions and a half of bottles of champagne. There are besides scores of great hogsheads almost as large as the tun of Heidelberg, and many hundreds of barrels filled with wine. The establishment covers an area of twelve acres and a half. The total length of the vaults is nearly two miles.

The wine of Moët and Chandon being manufactured for the masses, and generally low priced, is but little esteemed by European connoisseurs.

At Rheims, however, are to be found most of the wine manufacturers whose names are familiar to the world. Here are the Roederers, Clicquots, the Heidsiecks, the Mumms, and De St. Marceaux. Though these have generally their entire establishments at Rheims, some as H. Piper & Co., known as Heidsieck in the United States, have only their counting-houses in that town, and their wine-vaults at Epernay.

The Heidsiecks, Piper-Heidsieck, Hiedsieck & Co., and Charles Heidsieck & Co. are all of the same clan. It was, however, the predecessor of H. Piper & Co., a Heidsieck, who first gave currency

to the wine so well known in the United States by that name. This enterprising house, being the first of the wine manufacturers to venture in what was then deemed the hazardous trade with America, succeeded, while free from competition, in obtaining such an exclusive and wide circulation for their merchandise, that the word Heidsieck became synonymous in the United States with champagne. The latter was deemed superfluous; and some twenty years ago, no one ever thought of saying more, when he called for champagne, than "Give me a bottle of Heidsieck." Great riches have rewarded the enterprise of H. Piper & Co., who are now among the largest and wealthiest manufacturers, and have, apart from the private fortunes of the various partners and members of the family, a manufacturing and commercial establishment wielding a capital of three millions of dollars. The agents of the house in New York have shared in the prosperity of their principals; and Renauld & François, whose names are almost as familiar as Heidsieck, are now enjoying, in veritable chateaux of France, the results of their success.

With the real or affected connoisseurship that has come with the increased wealth and luxury of our people, a bottle of Heidsieck no longer pleases the taste of the fastidious. It is, however, one of the best ordinary wines that are sent to our country, though too sweet for a discriminating palate. It

may always be relied upon as a wholesome and pure wine, but not of the highest quality. Though now rejected by the judicious taster, its traditionary renown still secures for it the largest consumption by the gulping crowd. The other Heidsiecks, though far from having the success of their better known predecessor, have discovered that there is something in a name, and profited accordingly.

Though Piper & Co. (Heidsieck) have earned their reputation and fortune by their superior commercial judgment in anticipating the importance of the American trade, most of the other well-known manufacturers of champagne have succeeded through more irregular means, or been indebted to hazard for their success.

The famous champagne of *Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin*, which is so much esteemed in Russia, and where it has been so profusely drunk for forty or fifty years past, that its manufacturers—the noted Widow, Werlé, the Mayor of Rheims, and the “Baron de Sachs,” as he styles himself, her partners—have made such fortunes as to rank them among the *millionaires* of Europe, owes its success to chance. The Widow Clicquot had been the wife of one François-Marie Clicquot, “an *officer*,” vaguely says his biographer, “who had retired from active service in consequence of his wounds.” Corporal or Sergeant Clicquot—or whatever may have been his rank—was naturally of a convivial turn, and instinctively took to the wine business.

"At this period" (1798), we are told by his eulogistic biographer, "the trade in white wines at Rheims was in the hands of mere routinists, who were incapable of giving the least developement to it.

"M. Clicquot, endowed with a lively conception and an activity almost ardent, visited the neighboring vineyards, went down into all the cellars, compared, weighed, meditated, and then finally laid the foundation of an entirely different commercial system.

"Until then, the effervescing wines of Champagne came only from the cellars of the Abbey of Hautvillers.

"M. Clicquot undertook that they should also issue from the cellars of Rheims; with this difference, however, that while the monks—excellent drinkers—imbibed the most and best of their vintage, Monsieur Clicquot, less thirsty or less selfish, resolved to offer his wines to all the crowned heads of Europe, of whom he knew they were perfectly worthy.

"While big with this magnificent project, death came and cut short the career of the son-in-law of M. Ponsardin," that is to say, M. Clicquot, the former husband of the Widow Clicquot Ponsardin. Common rumor at Rheims tells a different story of the exit of this notable personage, saying that he cut his throat in despair of the success of the "entirely different commercial system" with which his biographer credits him.



Madame Clicquot thus became Widow Clicquot, and was left to carry out the magnificent project which had originated in the "lively conception and the activity almost ardent" of her late husband. Though only twenty-seven years of age, and "with a daughter in the cradle who became afterwards the Countess of Cheigné," this heroic dame "accepted with courage the position which destiny had given her." She struggled on spiritedly, but with little success, until the invasion of France by the Allies in 1815, when the Russians came thronging into Rheims and filled the cellars of the widow.

"All the Russian officers commanded by Saint Priest had lifted the champagne glass to their lips. It was said even that many of them preferred the popping of the bottle of Rheims to that of the cannon of the Emperor, and that on the retaking of Rheims, about a dozen prisoners were made, who had been laid under the table by the first and pacific artillery. At the moment of the attack of the French troops, there remained some drinkers but no soldiers. These, dead drunk, had not heard the sound, 'To horse!'"

When these officers returned to Saint Petersburg and Moscow, they talked so much of, and praised so highly, the delights of their debauch in the cellars of the Widow Clicquot, that they made her name famous throughout Russia, and gave her wine a currency which has made her and her partners enormously rich.

I knew Madame Clicquot, a dwarfish, withered old woman of eighty-nine years, whose whole soul was in business, scanning over each day to her last the ledger of the commercial house to which she had given her name. She died in 1866.

The Clicquot wine is made to suit the Russian taste, which likes a sweet and strong champagne. It is accordingly highly brandied and sugared, and although doubtless generally made of good wine, its qualities, whatever they may be, are entirely smothered in the sweetness. Unlike other houses, that of the Widow Clicquot never varies its wine to suit varying tastes. A bottle of Clicquot in America is the same as a bottle of Clicquot in Russia or elsewhere. The Clicquot wine is fast losing prestige, and will before long become obsolete, if not adapted to the more discriminating taste of modern drinkers.

Louis Roederer & Co., who, during the last ten years or so, have come into repute as the manufacturers of a popular wine, are indebted for their success to the usual means employed by charlatans to create a demand for their nostrums. Emulous of the fame of the Widow Clicquot in Russia, they sent there a shrewd German, who had become familiar with the language and trade of that country while travelling over it as a *commis-voyageur* or bagman for some trading-house or other of his native land. Not easily abashed, and of an intrusive disposition, he determined to make himself known.

With a meagre valise of his own, and an abundant supply of his masters' wine, which he distributed profusely, he was not an unwelcome guest in a country where strangers are comparatively so rare that their claims to regard are hardly investigated, and the thirst for wine and strong drink so eager that any one who has them to offer is readily received. He thus for many years travelled over and over Russia, pouring out gratuitously into the vast and willing throat of the whole empire such quantities of champagne, that the Roederers were nearly made bankrupts by the expense.

Alarmed by this profusion, which, having already cost some hundreds of thousands, was fast beggaring them, the Roederers recalled their costly traveller, who earnestly begged for a little respite. This being granted, he finally returned to Rheims. His object was accomplished. He had succeeded in so habituating the taste of the Russians to the Roederer wine, and familiarizing them with its name, that order after order was sent for it to Rheims; and the manufacturers from menacing poverty were lifted suddenly to assured wealth, in which the prodigal traveller, being made a partner of the house in reward for his services, was permitted to participate. The house of L. Roederer & Co., though for many years moving slowly under the care of its founder, Schroeder, a plodding German, now ranks among the largest and wealthiest of all Champagne. They sell, it is said, 75,000 dozen

bottles annually. The chief consumption of the Roederer wine in the United States is at Boston. It is one of the best and most costly of the wines manufactured in large quantities, but, like all those adapted to general consumption, is loaded with sugar, that it may be toothsome to the masses. The wine is sold under the two names of Roederer, the present proprietor of the house, and Schroeder, the original founder.

A brand of champagne once extensively made known, whether by legitimate enterprise, hazard, or charlatanism, becomes a sure source of wealth. The wine is bought and drank on the mere strength of its name, without regard to its quality, and even in spite of its badness, just as the much advertised and hurtful panaceas of the nostrum-venders are purchased and swallowed by the credulous and suffering millions.

The Clicquots, Roederers, and others have been beset by claimants to their kinship, who, though conscious of the value of a name, have given no better proof of relationship than in their opposition and rivalry. The Widow Clicquot found a representative of her own name in an ambitious mason, who, dropping his trowel, took to the bottle, and now rivals his notable namesake as a manufacturer of champagne.

My bootmaker at Rheims, who rejoices in the name of Clicquot, and claims to be a cousin-german of the famous widow, told me that in the

heyday of youth he had been tempted by the offer of a wealthy capitalist to take him, or rather his name, into partnership, and establish a wine manufactory. He accepted; but his youthful aspirations were suddenly checked by the threat of the then formidable widow to bring a suit against him. He therefore shrunk back again into his little shop, where I found him a blinking, nervous old man of seventy, bent persistently over his last. His possible success as a wine manufacturer will always be left to conjecture; but it is sure that if the world had gained another producer of Clicquot champagne, that Rheims would have lost a most trusty shoemaker. Clicquot is no uncommon name in Rheims, and it may be seen displayed over sausage shops, *cabarets*, *cafés*, and cobblers' stalls. It is surprising, therefore, that the adventurous mason has been the only one to utilize the popular patronymic.

The name of Roederer is, on the contrary, rare at Rheims; and the veritable possessors of it reposed for a long time in fancied security against any chance of a competitor. There was, however, an enterprising wine dealer, who, unable to give the rapid circulation he desired to his champagne, had long sought the indorsement of some more popular name than his own. His researches, which had extended all over France, during his travels for many years, on the highways and in the by-ways where his eagerness for trade had led him, were finally

successful. At a *café* in Strasburg he chanced to be served with his after-dinner *demi-tasse* and *petit-verre* by a *garçon* who was the fortunate possessor of the cabalistic name of Roederer. Here was the prize he had so long sought in vain, and he secured it at once. Proposals were made and accepted by the not unambitious servitor, who, doffing his apron, and assuming with true French facility the habiliments and manners of the respectable *bourgeois*, passed with quick transition from serving drink at Strasburg to making it at Rheims.

Bringing with him no capital but his name—which, however, was worth more than hundreds of thousands of francs—and that judgment of wine which had been matured by his long indulgence in the leakage of the *café* or the forgotten heel-taps of its customers, he was installed as the partner of his fortunate discoverer, whose house was thenceforward known as that of Theophile Roederer & Co.

The original Roederers resisted to their utmost what they deemed a usurpation of their rights, and appealed to the courts of law. It was decided that a man had a legal right to use his own name, whether for the purpose of selling or serving wine, or for any other proper business; but it was enjoined upon the new Roederer that he should affix to all his bills, invoices, and labels the date of the establishment of his house, in order to distinguish it from that of the original one. In spite of this, the public constantly confounds the two, and I myself have

time and again seen at the table of the *Hôtel du Lion d'Or*, at Rheims, would-be connoisseurs who had been imposed upon by an artful and interested *garçon*, smacking their lips over an indifferent bottle of the false, and loudly declaring that they recognized the flavor of the better wine of the genuine Roederer.

Moët & Chandon, the Mumms, and De St. Marceaux have not as yet, it is believed, been interfered with by any importunate namesakes. The Mumms at Rheims are branches of two great German houses, and may be always relied on for a fair average wine. De St. Marceaux, though of growing fame, has not yet, in the United States, the reputation he merits. In Rheims he is esteemed the most expert and conscientious of manufacturers. His judgment is deemed beyond appeal; and when a connoisseur wants the best the country is capable of producing, and is willing to pay for it, he can surely get it of De St. Marceaux.

## CHAPTER VII.

Champagne a Modern Wine—Hautvillers—Dom Perignon—  
A Jolly Monk—*Petits Soupers*—A Pious Pilgrimage—Bac-  
chus Street—The Champagne Trade—How conducted—  
A Great Effort—Failure—The Wine Travellers—Effect of  
Champagne on Health.

IT is only within the last fifty years that the trade in champagne wine has become important. In fact, although the wine of the country has been famous from time immemorial, and long shared with the clarets and Burgundies of France the esteem of the world, the *vin mousseux*, as the French call it, the effervescing wine, and what we know as champagne, is comparatively a modern discovery. Its origin hardly dates beyond the eighteenth century, and it was still, even in the middle of that century, so rare that only a few rich and privileged amateurs tasted it. Moët & Chandon in 1780, who were then as now the chief manufacturers, thought it a bold venture to have made six thousand bottles in the year. Their present annual sale is over a hundred and fifty thousand dozen.

On the left of the railway from Paris to Strasburg, within an hour's ride of Rheims, is the ancient gray-stoned hamlet of Hautvillers. It stands



at the top of the vine-clad hills which rise from the banks of the river Marne ; and when I first saw it, on a bright autumnal day, the spire of its old church and its antiquated gables were flushed with a red hue by the noonday sun, which was fast ripening its surrounding grapes for the coming vintage. It looked as if warmed and exhilarated in its old age by its own generous wine, and destined still to survive many more sober but less vigorous modern villages.

In Hautvillers there was the famous royal monastery of Saint Peter, which, say its historians, gave nine archbishops to the see of Rheims, and twenty-two abbés to various celebrated monasteries. Among others, they add, there was the venerable Peter, the Abbé of Cluny. It gave also to the world, for which all wine drinkers should be grateful, a jolly monk who was the inventor of champagne. This was Dom Perignon, who died in 1715 at the ripe age of nearly four score years. He was chosen the *procureur* of the great Abbey for the purity of his taste, the soundness of his head, and his unremitting devotion to Bacchus. His chief duty was to take charge of its vineyards, of which the establishment possessed the broadest and sunniest of the whole country ; to receive from the patient toilers of the land the eleventh barrel of all the wine they made, which their spiritual lords and temporal masters of the abbey extorted from them ; to press the grapes to make the wine of the establishment, and

to store it away in its cellars, together with that it had squeezed out of its oppressed vassals.

Dom Perignon, born a taster, and strengthened by constant practice, became so expert that when, in the decline of life, he was blind, not one of his holy brethren, even with the aid of his eyes, could compete with him as a judge of wine. "Dom Perignon," says an old chronicler, "being blind toward the end of his life, ordered the grapes of different vineyards to be brought to him, recognized each kind by the taste, and said, 'You must marry (mix) the wine of this grape with that of the other.' "

In the course of his multifarious wine-mixings and experiments, Dom Perignon, who had already by his skill raised the reputation of the wine of the holy fathers of the monastery to the greatest height, by hazard (or rather, it should be said, by the inspiration of genius, for such accidents only happen to genius) discovered the effervescing wine, now known as champagne. The artful Dom kept the secret to himself, and the wine for the *symposia* of the holy and jovial brotherhood of the Abbey of Saint Peter. These spiritual fathers, however, rewarded the piety of their royal sons and crowned defenders of the faith with an occasional bottle. Thus, thanks to the holy monks, the magnificent Louis XIV. was enabled to relieve his formal *tête-à-têtes* with the saintly Maintenon by a glass of champagne; the lively regent to give fresh impulse

to the sallies of his *petits-soupers*; and the debauched Louis XV. to revive in the orgies of the *Petit Trianon* the prostrated energies of an exhausted sensuality.

Dom Perignon is said to have died in the full odor of sanctity, gratefully remembered by his convivial and holy brethren, and his name should be embalmed in the memory of every one within the sound of a pop of the champagne bottle. Among his other virtues, heavenly and terrestrial, there is not only the discovery of champagne, but that of the cork, which he was the first to put into a bottle, for before his time the only stopper used was a bunch of flax soaked in oil.

I made a pious pilgrimage to Hautvillers, and, passing along the principal street of the village, the *Rue Bacchus*, which I thought most surely to be the road to the abbey of jovial fame, met a dwarfish soldier, in a blue *capote*. I asked him to point out to me the way to the abbey. He touched his red cap politely, and answered that he had never heard of it. As French soldiers proverbially know nothing but how to fight and to boast of it, I next asked a staid-looking citizen in a black *chapeau* as tall as a chimney, who informed me that the abbey no longer existed, but had been destroyed by the iconoclasts of the first French Revolution. *Et ils avaient raison*; "And they were right," muttered the practical Frenchman.

The trade in champagne with the United States

is generally conducted through the medium of stationary agents at New York. These receive the wine on consignment, and dispose of it to the best advantage of their principals. They are paid a commission, ordinarily varying from ten to twenty per cent., but which reaches sometimes twenty-five and even thirty. When the brand of wine is well known and esteemed, and the demand proportionately large and regular, the commission paid to the agent is less ; and when unknown and of uncertain sale, greater.

So much depends upon the mere name of a champagne, that the most strenuous efforts are made to give it circulation. Advertising, the bribing of grocers, wine dealers, hotel keepers, and steamboat proprietors with low prices, that they may make a proportionately large profit in retailing the champagne to their customers ; the giving of gratuities to bar-keepers and waiters to secure their favor and insinuating commendations ; the printing of showy labels and attractive cards, and the pouring out profusely of the contents of sample bottles to friends and chance visitors, are among the ordinary means resorted to. These, of course, are expensive, and if paid for by the agents, they must be compensated by liberal commissions.

Such efforts, however great, are often unrewarded with success, and many attempts to give currency to a brand of wine have proved abortive. The patience or the means, of both agent and principal,

become exhausted, and after a more or less vigorous *feu de joie* of the vinous artillery of some new house, not a solitary pop of its cork is heard. I can recollect some fifteen or sixteen years ago that the wine of *Max Soutine* burst all at once upon us like a bouquet of French rockets. It was fizzing here and fizzing there, dazzling our eyes with its resplendent mottoes, and stunning our ears with its detonations, but it suddenly went out in silence and obscurity.

Though the manufacturers of the wine were among the richest of Rheims, they found that the *feu d'artifice*, with which their agent had been indulging the Amercian public, was so costly and the remuneration so uncertain, that they grudged the expense and ordered the exhibition to be closed at once. There agent had spent some fifty thousand dollars in the course of his display. He had, it is true, succeeded in making known the name of his principal, for he had printed it again and again in every newspaper, pasted it on every wall, intruded it by dozens of bottles into every editorial sanctum, thrust it down the throat of every son of Bacchus, and even displayed it in a great hall of the metropolis, crowning a fountain flowing with veritable champagne wine, which he dispensed gratuitously to the thirsty public.

Owing either to the want of persistence of the manufacturer, or possibly to the satiety of the American people, with a name which had been so

thrust upon them, there were none found willing to purchase a bottle of Max Sutaine. The name was accordingly changed, and the champagne, of a fair average quality, was subsequently drank in the United States under the brand of Farre & Co., of which house the widow of Max Sutaine was the chief partner. She now, having got rid of the Farres, continues the business under the brand of Max Sutaine, which has lately been reintroduced to American wine drinkers under the more favourable auspices of an energetic and not immodest agent.

Such are the difficulties and the expense of giving currency to a brand of champagne, that many years generally pass before the manufacturer is enabled to obtain a remunerative profit for his wine. The high commissions to his agents, or other costs incurred in the course of making his name known, not only absorb his profits, but frequently encroach upon his capital.

The motives alleged by the manufacturers for disposing of their wines exclusively through agents, are, that the public can be sure of obtaining through these authorized representatives their genuine products, and that they are forced to select such agents and secure to them a monopoly of their sales, as an inducement to make the effort necessary to give currency to a brand of champagne. There are two well-known houses, however,—Roederer and Veuve Clicquot,—which do not sell their wines in this country through the medium of agents. The former

has always sold its wine directly, but the latter has only lately adopted the same system, with the hope of avoiding further trouble with our custom-house officers, by whom it has hitherto been greatly tormented. They each sell, however, only to a single purchaser.

In France and Europe the trade in champagne wine is not carried on, as in the United States, by means of stationary agents, but generally by travellers, or such persons as are called *commis voyageurs* in French, and bagmen in English. These solicit orders, and when they obtain them, send them to the manufacturers at Rheims and elsewhere to be executed. The producer of champagne thus becomes for the most part the direct source of supply to consumers; and he furnishes his wine in almost every degree of quantity, but generally in small proportions, varying from two to five or six dozen bottles.

The trade in Europe, it will be seen, is for the most part a retail one, and the nominal prices of the wine, thus sold directly to European consumers, are much higher than those at which it is invoiced when consigned to the agents of champagne in the United States. Seventy-five centimes (fifteen cents), or even a franc (twenty cents) a bottle, is the estimated amount of the expenses of a traveller. Apart from the salaries and cost of travel, there is a large gratuitous pouring out of wine. Taste being the only argument possible wherewith to convince a

customer, whether he be *gourmet*, hotel keeper, or restaurateur, recourse is frequently made to it. This serves greatly to increase a traveller's expenses, which not uncommonly amount to seventy-five francs a day. Thus it is that a bottle of champagne, which ordinarily costs the producer two francs, and two francs and a half per bottle, is sold by him in Europe at three and a half or four francs, in which prices his profit of ten sous or so per bottle, and the expenses of the costly mode of sale, are included.

As a general rule, champagne of a well-known brand cannot be directly bought of its manufacturer at Rheims. The agents in the United States, and the travellers in other parts of the world, enjoy by contract a monopoly of all sales. This privilege is supposed to be necessary as an encouragement to the exercise of that personal effort essential to making known and selling the wine. It is impossible to obtain at Rheims, for love or money, a bottle of genuine Clicquot or Roederer, that is to say, a bottle with their names on, though wine of the same vintage, or that of equally good or better quality, can be obtained in any quantity the purchaser may desire.

There is no place, even in France,—if the consumer cannot trust to his own taste, but must have the indorsement of *Veuve Clicquot*,—where he can obtain that security except at the Grand Hotel and the Hotel du Louvre, at Paris. It is only lately,



moreover, that the noted widow deigned to send her bottles to these great caravansaries, in deference, it is believed, to their Russian frequenters. The wine of Roederer, though not sold to the consumer at Rheims, is found in every hotel and restaurant elsewhere.

Most of the manufacturers will unhesitatingly sell the same wines as those which bear their name, but under a different appellation. It is only the monopoly of the brand which is granted, and not that of the wine. An American purchaser, for example, can buy at Rheims, if he is willing to pay for it, the best champagne ever made, provided he will take it without the brand of Clicquot, De St. Marceaux, or other, and substitute John Smith, the American Eagle, or whatever may be his name or fancy.

Though Rheims is the great centre of the manufacture of and trade in champagne wines, it is a costly luxury to the consumer. At the hotels he is charged seven francs a bottle, notwithstanding that so many millions of bottles are annually made in the place, at an average cost to the manufacturer of from two francs to two francs and a half each.

The functions of a traveller for a wine-house are by no means light, and but few are able long to perform them. The quantity of vinous fluid he is obliged to drink in the course of the performance of his duties is a test of stomach, brain, and nerve, that it would be supposed that nothing but a frame

of caoutchouc could withstand. One confessed to me to have drunk two bottles of champagne a day for ten years. He had thus, during that time, poured down his throat 7300 quarts or 1825 gallons of wine. Beyond the scores on a rubicund face, and perhaps a somewhat premature fullness of the waistcoat, I did not discover any visible record of this enormous consumption. Many of the people, however, engaged in the wine business of Rheims, have not been so fortunate as my travelling friend. Gout, rheumatism, and affections of the nerves, stomach, and kidneys, are the not unfrequent results of the excessive quantities of wine absorbed by those whose business it is to make and sell it. The tremulous hand and shaking head, I fancied, were more common at Rheims than I had noticed elsewhere. The wise head of the great personage of the place has a pendulum-like movement, which I for a long time attributed to the overweight of thought, but was told that it was one of the effects of champagne drinking. The prudent taster generally ejects the wine, after having moved and held it long enough in his mouth for his tongue and palate to catch its taste and distinguish its flavor. The wine manufacturers of Rheims, mostly of a rotundity of form and a ruddiness of complexion which befit their jovial trade, are not, it must be acknowledged, substantial arguments in proof of the wholesomeness of their product, of which they are not reluctant consumers.

The traveller of a wine-house must not only have a strong head but a bold face, a voluble tongue, and an indiscriminate and inexhaustible sociability. He must never confess to a headache, he must be at home in every company, must always have a story to tell, never let the talk flag for a moment, and clink glasses miscellaneously with all the world. He is found everywhere, even in Turkey, where, in spite of the Koran which forbids the use of wine by the faithful, there is a large consumption of champagne. The conscience of the Mohammedan, however, acquits itself of the sin of disobedience, on the plea that it is not wine but champagne with which he is intoxicating himself.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Germans at Rheims—The Mayor of Rheims—The Good Apprentice—An Imperial Favorite—A Baron in the Wine Trade—French and Germans Compared—A Nation of Shopkeepers—Aristocracy of Wine Makers—Nobles in the Business—Reflected Glory—An Old Family.

THE intrusive Germans who have thrust themselves in large numbers into Rheims, Epernay, Chalons, Ay, and other towns and villages of the neighboring country, have the chief control of the wine-trade of Champagne. The Heidsiecks are all of German origin, and the three houses known in this country by that name are represented and conducted either by Germans or their immediate descendants.

Piper, the chief capitalist, and for many years, until prostrated by disease, the most energetic partner of the house formerly known as Heidsieck, but now as H. Piper & Co., was born in Germany. His associate and successor in the management of the great establishment, Kunkelmann, came also from the same country.

Heidsieck and the three other partners of the firm of Heidsieck & Co., are all Teutons, and Charles Heidsieck, of the house of Charles Heid-

sieck & Co., as his name indicates, comes of the same stock.

Werler, the chief of the noted house of Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin, came a poor boy to Rheims from the duchy of Nassau. Taken into the employ of the Widow Clicquot as a lad of all work, with the mere pittance of two dollars or so a week for wages, his intelligent activity won for him rapid advancement. The gossips of Rheims assert that the blue eyes, ruddy face, and broad shoulders of the youth, finding favor with the hitherto disconsolate widow, caused a livelier appreciation of his moral and intellectual qualities in the counting-house, and gave an irresistible impulse to his progress.

The young German was soon made a partner, and acquiring large wealth with the spread of the brand of Widow Clicquot and the consequent extension of her business, became a notable personage. Changing his name from Werler into Werlé, and thus softening its Teutonic rudeness to please the Gallic tongue and ear; marrying a French wife, and assuming, with the facility of self-expatriation of his countrymen, who can hardly be considered as having a country of their own, citizenship in France, he pursued a career of shrewd compliance which has met with its earthly reward. He is the richest man in Rheims, and one of the richest in France, having, it is said, accumulated a fortune of four or five millions of dollars. Like most thriving French citizen traders, the *bourgeois* of practical France, he

is an ardent imperialist. Louis Napoleon has accordingly taken Monsieur Werlé into especial favor, of which he has given him various unmistakable marks. He has been decorated over and over again with red ribbons; been made by the Emperor Mayor of Rheims; and universal suffrage, with polite deference to imperial will, has chosen him one of the deputies to the *Corps Legislatif* from the department of the Marne.

Imperial regard has condescended even to care for the domestic interests of the imperial favorite. The Emperor has married the son and daughter of the wine merchant to the children of two of his court favorites. M. Werlé's son is now the husband of the daughter of the Duc de Montebello; and M. Werlé's daughter the wife of M. Magne, whose father is a minister of state. Imperial majesty—with redoubled force of condescension, for the Empress on this occasion was by the side of the Emperor—honored the baptism of the infant of the Magnes and grandchild of Werlé. The Emperor, it is said, will do any thing for his favorite wine-merchant but drink his champagne, as his taste having been formed during his convivial days in England, he prefers a drier wine. Werlé is destined to a senatorship at least, and possibly to a renewal in his person of the ancient title of Count of Champagne.

Another partner of the house of Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin, is Baron de Sachs, as he styles himself.

He also is a German, and a nephew, it is believed, of Werler. Although boasting a German title, he was not better provided for in his youth than his poor and adventurous uncle, to whom he is indebted for all he has in the world, except the barony, for which neither that relative nor any of his ancestors are in fact responsible. It seems no uncommon thing for foreigners in France, particularly Germans, when sufficiently obscure or remote from their native places to baffle inquiry, to assume the rank of Baron or Count, to which they are no more entitled than to the empire of the Cæsars.

This Baron de Sachs seemed always to be troubled with an uneasy consciousness that his title, somehow or other, either through his own forgetfulness or the ignorance of every one else of his claim to it, would give him the slip. He accordingly took care, whether he had a bill of wine to receipt or an invoice to swear to, to secure a record of the barony, by writing his title in full. In his brand new chateau a monogram indicating the baronial claims of its proprietor stares you from every cornice and window without, and from every carpet and curtain within. Valet and chamber-maid are enjoined never to forget the baron and baroness in their addresses to their master and mistress, on pain of instant dismissal. When the baron first presented himself to me, he brought with him a footman to carry the invoice which it was my official duty to legalize. I so far, under the levelling suggestion of

the Stars and Stripes which hung above my head, forgot the distance between the height of the baron and the lowliness of the servitor that I insisted upon the latter taking a seat, which he resisted for a long time, awed by the imposing presence of his master. I finally, however, succeeded, but it was the last time the baron visited me in such state. He always came afterwards in solitary grandeur.

The house of Roederer owes its origin to one Schroeder, a German, and his nephews, the present chiefs, though born in France, have all the substantial physical characteristics and plodding mental qualities of the Teutonic race; while their partner, Kraft, whose trading artifices as a traveller in Russia were so successful, was born and bred in Germany.

The representatives at Rheims of the two houses of the Mumms, are, like their principals, both Germans.

There is, in fact, not a single wine establishment in all Champagne which is not under the control, more or less, of a native of Germany. If the nominal head should chance to be a Frenchman, he is sure to have a partner or a chief clerk of that country. There was, however, a champagne house which happened to be controlled exclusively by natives of France. It became bankrupt while I was at Rheims, and it was a common remark that it perished for want of a German.

When I asked how it had happened that, to con-



duct so national a trade as that of champagne wine, France had called Germany to its aid, I was told that it was owing to the fact that there were so few Frenchmen, and so many Germans, who had a knowledge of foreign languages. This can hardly be the full explanation, for it would seem easy to employ good linguists to serve as travellers or foreign correspondents, without giving up, as the French have done, the whole control of an important national trade to a foreign people.

I fancy that the French have a natural inaptitude for commerce. With an unquestioned superiority of taste, a precise attention to details, much thriftiness, an easy compliance, and a polite address, they make good workmen and excellent small dealers. Napoleon called the English a nation of shopkeepers. The saying in its literal sense is more justly applicable to the French. They are emphatically the shopkeepers of the world. Wherever the traveller goes, he finds the Parisian *monsieur* or *madame* installed behind the counters of the confectionary, perfumery, millinery, and curiosity shops. It is so at Rio Janeiro, Lima, Valparaiso, and over the whole continent of America; but the Frenchman is rarely found in the counting-houses of those places. While he is the shopkeeper, the German, the Englishman, and the American are the merchants.

It is the same to a certain extent even in France. The Frenchman contents himself for the most part

with adjusting a color, devising a pattern, inventing a toy, or peddling small wares; while he leaves the management of the great financial, manufacturing, and commercial establishments of his country to its adopted citizens from Germany or elsewhere.

The sound, practical education of the German is doubtless the secret of his success in France and in other countries, where he rivals in prosperity more enterprising and commercial people than the French. It is comparatively the poor man in Germany—the one that has to seek his fortune—who is so well disciplined by the excellent schools of his country for the struggle with life. He is thoroughly drilled in all that is essential to a commercial education, and is generally taught all the modern languages,—and so well taught that he can speak them fluently without having left his native land. Being poor, and generally unable to meet with the success in his own overcrowded country to which his intelligent ambition aspires, he is ever ready to journey into other lands, where he knows that his superiority to those of his class will be sure to secure for him the object of his desires.

He seldom finds a successful competitor in France, for the poor Frenchman wants his educated capacity, and the educated Frenchman his impelling necessities. The needy but well-instructed German, combining in his own person the means of the one and the motives of the other, spurred by poverty and trained by education, soon takes the

lead in the race and wins the prize of life. Exercised, too, in the forced self-denial of early poverty, and the obsequious deference imposed by his humble origin, he is a cheap and willing servitor. He has thus all the elements of success in trade,—capacity, thrift, and devotion ; and it is not surprising that with such qualities the German should succeed in Rheims and elsewhere.

It would have been difficult for me to discover, from any intrinsic qualities they possessed, that the wine-merchants constituted the aristocracy of Rheims. That, however, being generally accepted as a fact in the place, I am bound to record it. They are certainly the plutocracy, for the largest fortunes are possessed by them, and the greatest capital is employed in their trade, though the wool-combers and manufacturers are fast gaining upon them.

So convinced is the wine manufacturer of his superiority in rank; that he generally avoids all intimate association with others than those engaged in the same trade. Thus the wool and the wine people form two different and distinct societies at Rheims. The man who puts a flannel shirt on a back is almost scorned by him who pours a bottle of champagne into the corresponding belly. To satisfy an artificial thirst is deemed a more dignified function than clothing the naked.

There are, however, it is true, some more or less genuine nobles engaged in the manufacture of

champagne, or connected by alliance with those who are. Without counting the Baron de Sachs, to whom justice has already been done, there are the Duke of Montebello and the Viscount de Brimont, both of whom are makers of and dealers in champagne. The Duke of Montebello is the son of Napoleon's marshal, Lannes. Becoming possessed, by purchase for a small sum, of an ancient chateau on the banks of the Marne, and amid the celebrated vineyards of Ay, he not unnaturally took to the trade of wine-making. Though high in the favor of Louis Napoleon, who sent him as ambassador to Russia, and conferred upon him and his son other offices and dignities, and withal the son of a duke, he thought it not derogatory to his rank or descent to engage in the profitable business of selling champagne. The brand of wine known as Montebello comes directly from the Duke's chateau, within the ancient walls of which he has installed his manufactory, and beneath the ancestral domain hollowed out his cellars. The Duke, as he is poor, has made, in becoming a tradesman, a sensible concession to the practical demands of the age. Apart, too, from his necessities, he may have thought that the obligations of rank, which in his case dated back but one generation,—for his father, the great marshal, had commenced life as a dyer,—were too feeble to be regarded.

The Viscount de Brimont is known to champagne drinkers by his family name of Ruinart. He

is a descendant—a collateral one, it is supposed—of one Dom Ruinart, who was of the convivial and holy brotherhood of the monastery of Hautvillers. How he became possessed of his rank I have never heard; but the wine manufactory of which he is proprietor is one of the most ancient in Champagne, whatever may be the antiquity of his title. His wine was in former times in considerable vogue, and his bottles may now occasionally be seen with the brand of *Ruinart, père et fils*.

The wine-trade of Champagne has received a reflected glory from the aristocratic alliances contracted by Madame Clicquot. As the best blood of France can always be purchased by the heaviest purses, she obtained by her wealth the hand of the Comte de Chevigné for her only daughter. “This *gentilhomme Breton, d’antique race*, was descended from parents who had the signal honor,” we translate from his biographer, “of assisting at the balls of Marie Antoinette, of being invited to the theatre at Versailles, of riding in the carriages of Louis XVI., and of accompanying his majesty to the hunt.” His countess is dead; but she left a daughter, who in her turn, so far from derogating from the aristocratic predilections of her mother for nobility, rather improved upon them by marrying the Count Louis-Samuel-Victorien Rochechouart de Mortemart. The antiquity of his descent is proved by his arms, which bear upon them some waves rampant, with the motto,—

*Avant que la mer fut au monde  
Rochechouart portait des ondes.*

Before God made the sea to roll,  
Rochechouart bore waves on his scroll.

The Widow Clicquot, to do honor to her titled children, bought the old feudal manor of Bour-sault, which formerly belonged to the D'Orsays. Not content, however, with the old-fashioned house at the bottom, she raised an imposing structure at the top of the hill. This, which can be seen from the railway as you pass Epernay, is as much like a veritable chateau, with pepper-box turrets, as the imagination of the aspiring architect, aided by all the wealth of the Clicquots, could make it. Its grandiose spaciousness and luxurious appurtenances make it the wonder of every Parisian *badaud* and rustic visitor. Among its other attractions is a dining-room, adorned with elaborate armorial carvings in wood, with which are intertwined the initials C. and M., of the noble names Cheigné and Mortemart.

On one occasion a party of the neighboring farmers paid a visit to the chateau to inspect its wonders. They were conducted by a zealous servitor through all the show apartments. On reaching the dining-room, he pointed, with conscious pride at serving such distinguished masters, to the carved armorial shields surmounted with a double crown, and bearing in letters of gold the initials C. and M.

"You see," said the cicerone to his gaping listeners, "those letters mean *Cheigné-Mortemart*."

"Bah!" replied one of the knowing countrymen. "Get out with your *Chevigné-Mortemarts*."

"But I assure you"—

"Bah!" repeated the confident spokesman. "You are quite off the track: they mean, I tell you, *Champagne Mousseux*. Was n't that the making of their fortune?"

*Comte de Chevigné* has employed his aristocratic leisure in writing and publishing a little book, entitled *Les Contes Rémois*. It is a neatly printed volume, and contains some graceful sketches by Meissonier and Foulquier. The tales themselves are imitations of Boccaccio and Lafontaine, and have none of the wit and grace, but all the grossness, of those authors.

The *Comte de Mortemart* gave his spare moments to art, and once painted a picture, "which was admitted by the committee on painting into the Paris Exhibition."

## CHAPTER IX.

The Wine Country—The Famous Vineyards—Sobriety of Scene—Subdivision of Land—Villages and Inhabitants—Chateaux—Extent of Vineyards—A Travelled Wine—A Delicate Native—The Grape—Different Qualities.

**R**HEIMS, though the chief seat of the manufacture of champagne wine and of its trade, is somewhat remote from the famous vineyards. The town lies in a basin which commences to rise, about five or six miles away, into an amphitheatre of hills which roll on beyond for ten leagues or so, in successive waves of low heights, until again subsiding into the vast plain which forms the department of the Marne.

On the acclivities of these hills grow the grapes from which is made the famous champagne wine. This generous product flourishes in a soil so inhospitable to all other that it has been long known as *Champagne pauvre*,—lousy or beggarly Champagne,—to distinguish it from the richer parts of the ancient province of that name. The department of the Marne is chiefly formed of a vast plain of dry and undulating chalk, and the hills upon which the champagne grape grows are composed of that



substance, with a thin alluvial soil spread over them.

The vine is cultivated in the five *arrondissements* of the department: *Chalons sur Marne*, *Epernay*, *Rheims*, *Sainte-Menehould*, and *Vitry-le-Français*. It is only, however, in those of Rheims and Epernay where the grape is produced of which the genuine champagne wine is made.

In the shallow valleys formed by the hills of little height, and upon the banks of the river Marne, which flows through them and washes their chalky bases, are various towns and hamlets, known by name to all drinkers of champagne. Going south and east from Rheims two leagues distant, leaving on our right Ville-Dommange and Rilly,—where excellent red wines are made, but only drank at home,—we reach Sillery, which has a reputation, which belongs by right to its neighbor Verzenay, of producing a grape which is an essential ingredient of all good champagne. The vineyards of Verzenay commence their rise just at the outskirts of the little hamlet of Sillery. They then extend some five or six miles south until they reach those of Bouzy. Descending the hills of this suggestively named place, we reach the banks of the Marne. We have now left the vineyards which produce the wine called the wine of the mountain, *le vin de la montagne*, and, turning westward along the bank of the river, we arrive at Mareuil sur Ay and Ay, where we are among the vineyards from which is

obtained the *vin de la rivière*, the wine of the river. Continuing the same course, we enter Dizy, another name suggestive of its potent product, and, still among the vineyards of the river, extend our survey of Hautvillers, of jovial fame. On crossing the Marne, we pass through the town of Epernay, and, going south through Pierry, Cramant, and Avize, we reach Vertus, the limit of the champagne district, ten leagues away from Rheims.

The basin in which the town of Rheims lies, though laboriously cultivated and forced into the production of fair harvests of oats, barley, and other grain, has a desert-like look. Its shallow spaciousness, the scarcity of trees, the few farm-houses and scattered windmills bare of all shade and shrubbery, the want of fences or hedges,—for the divisions of the land are marked only by solitary and almost invisible stones,—give it an appearance to the hasty view of a widely extended and arid plain. The only relief to the eye are the distant hills which inclose it, the tall and scraggy poplars that stand stiffly on either side of the canal, the scrubby growth which hides the lazy current of the filthy Vesle, the pepper-box turrets of some ambitious citizen's chateau rising out of the trim and scanty foliage which surrounds it, and the courses of the railways, marked by their carefully tended embankments of grass and hedges of hawthorn.

The wine district, though by no means highly picturesque, affords a refreshing change to the eye from

the duller aspect of the immediate neighborhood of Rheims. The undulations of the ground give greater variety, of course, to the scenery. There are little hills and shallow vales, though not mountains and valleys, as the inhabitants insist upon calling them; and these, with their varying forms and position, afford some diversity. The eye meets with an occasional surprise on shifting its point of vision. A step or two higher may bring hitherto unseen hills into view, or a turn to the right or left reveal an unexpected nook in which are nestling thatched farm-house, dusty flour-mill, and old rustic church.

There is a great uniformity, however, even in the wine country, though its careful culture, the thrifty look of its villages, the cleanliness and excellence of its roads, and the suggestions everywhere met of its exhilarating product, gave it a cheerful aspect. It is, however, wondrously sober and quiet-looking, for the source of so much noise and excitement elsewhere; but turbulent streams often rise from placid springs.

The conformation of the hills is very similar. Their natural features hardly vary. Their height is nearly the same, and whatever irregularities there may have been on their surfaces have been long since smoothed over by constant and careful culture. The exclusive growth of the vine, the even height to which it is cut, the regularity with which it is planted, the uniform length and color of the poles to which it is attached, the absence of all landmarks

except the almost invisible boundary stones, and the entire want of trees or shrubs of any kind, make these vine-clad hills of Champagne so alike that none but a proprietor, stimulated by the interest of ownership, can distinguish one from the other.

The land is here, as in other parts of France, minutely subdivided, and many a proprietor has a vineyard no bigger than he could cover with the broad linen sheets of his best bed. There are about 16,412 hectares (41,030 acres) of land shared among 16,095 owners. These small proprietors, who are the principal inhabitants, live in the various hamlets and towns about which are clustered the vine hills. They form a very thriving population, unconscious of pauperism and undisturbed by fears of it. The villages in which they live are all built of stone, and each house is a plain but solid structure.

All these towns and hamlets appear very sombre to the passing visitor, for the narrow streets are flanked with great walls of stone behind which the inhabitants hide their houses and gardens, and thus seclude their homes from view. These people are neither shy nor unsociable, for you will find them each day in the public place about the old church, engaged in a lively chat with their neighbors, or in the *Café de l'Univers*, playing billiards or dominoes with any chance comer, or sharing a bottle of wine with some vagrant soldier, under the bush which hangs over the door of the village *cabaret*. All

Frenchmen, though so fond of society, shut up their houses close, for some reason or other; it may be, as it has been said, that they do so to prevent their susceptible countrymen from becoming too familiar with their wives and daughters. Whatever may be the cause, this walling themselves in gives great dullness to all the provincial towns and villages of the French.

At Epernay, Chalons, and Ay, which are towns of some magnitude, there are, in addition to the houses of the wine growers, large manufactories, whole streets of shops, and the humble dwellings of a numerous class of daily laborers. In almost every hamlet there are wine presses, and at Verzenay Moët & Chandon, Veuve Clicquot, and others, have their principal establishments of this kind.

Near Epernay, as I have related, is the new chateau of Boursault, built by Madame Clicquot, in order that she and her children might be lodged in a dignified accordance with their purchased alliance with nobility. At Sillery is an old chateau formerly belonging to, and inhabited by, Madame de Genlis, but now possessed by Jacquesson, a wealthy wine lord, who has added two or three new turrets to it, dug out a moat, thrown over it a drawbridge, and renovated the whole structure with a coat of paint or whitewash. At Mareuil sur Ay is the chateau of the Duke of Montebello, who bought it for a mere song from the descendant of an effete noble family, who refused to sell it at any price to

any one who was not at least a marquis of the old *régime*, or a duke of the new, to either of whom he was willing to yield it for a comparatively small sum.

There are various other chateaux and country residences scattered over the wine country, but singularly few and unattractive, when it is considered that it contains so many thriving towns, among whose inhabitants there are not a few wealthy men; but the French people in fact, unlike the English and Americans, are not fond of living away from a crowded population. They cannot endure the isolation of a life in the country, where, remote from the *café* and the theatre, they are condemned to the exclusive society of their own wives.

The vineyards of the whole department cover about 18,000 hectares of land (45,000 acres), which produce 636,200 hectolitres (13,996,400 gallons) of wine, of which the inhabitants consume 250,000 (5,500,000 gallons). This, however, it must be well understood, is not all *vin mousseux*, or what we know as champagne wine. Large quantities of ordinary red wine are produced in the country for the common consumption, and some little choice red wine for the drinking of the exclusive few. Of the latter the *Rilly* and *Bouzy* are highly esteemed, and can only be obtained in perfection at the tables of the wealthy wine-merchants, or by paying the high price of seven or eight francs a bottle in the best hotels and restaurants of Rheims and its neighborhood.

The history of the famous *Rilly*—a rare bottle of which the hospitable Mayor of Rheims dispenses occasionally to an appreciative guest, yields in grateful vassalage to his imperial patron, and bestows upon his aristocratic friends and relatives—is thus told by a contemporary French chronicler :—

Monsieur Werlé received one day from New York an order to send there a hundred cases of champagne. Profiting by the occasion of the long voyage to be made by this wine, he sent with it for company a dozen of red wine of the vintage of 1802, with a request to his correspondent to keep them in his cellars at New York for three months, and then send them back.

When the case returned the sides of each bottle were covered with a kind of sediment and the wine clouded. Mayor Werlé let it repose for six weeks, and then poured it into fresh bottles. It was now perfectly clear and of a delicious quality. The wine in becoming exquisite had changed color. “It had been sent red to America, and it came back with a beautiful shade of onion peel.” “This,” adds the chronicler, “is how the house of Clicquot was enabled thenceforward to add to their other excellent supplies the wine of *Rilly la Montagne*, which is disputed for at the table of princes.”

I have tasted both *Rilly* and *Bouzy* under the favorable auspices of a seat at the best tables of Rheims, and I can vouch for the justice of the great reputation of these exquisite wines. They

have the external appearance of the red Bordeaux and Burgundies, but intrinsic qualities which are all their own. With an aroma and *bouquet* peculiar to themselves, they have the animation of *Clos-Vougeot* without its headiness, and the smoothness of *Chateau-Lafitte* with more unctuousness. When perfected and ready for drinking, their organization is said to be so delicate that they are incapable of bearing a journey further than from the cellar to the table. A voyage from Rheims to Paris is sure to sicken them, and give such a shock to their delicate constitution that they never recover.

The ordinary red wines of the country compare favorably with those of Burgundy and Bordeaux, and can be had so cheap that none, even the poorest, need deprive themselves of their freest use. At the hotel they were supplied gratuitously at the discretion of the guest, and a bottle of the best can be purchased at Rheims for a few sous.

The grape from which the *vin mousseux*, or what we know as champagne, is made, is grown chiefly in the vineyards of Verzenay, Bouzy, Mareuil sur Ay, Dizy, Hautvillers, Epernay, Pierry, Cramant, Avize, Mesnil, and Vertus. The grape, contrary to what is generally supposed, is chiefly a red or black one, though the champagne wine, as we all know, which it produces is of a light amber color. The white grape is also cultivated, chiefly at Cramant, but much less abundantly than the red or black.



Each place produces a wine with qualities peculiar to itself. The wines of the mountain are said to have more body than those of the river. There are still nicer distinctions which only a skilled taster can appreciate; but that they exist can hardly be doubted, for no champagne wine, unless it combines by mixture the separate qualities of each vineyard, is deemed complete. The best bottle of champagne may be called the ideal of the art of wine-making. The manufacturer is like the artist, who selects his elements of beauty from individual examples, taking here a brilliant eye, and there a graceful curve, a feature or an expression, and unites them in his perfected statue or picture.

In making his wine, the manufacturer chooses with a discriminating taste the separate products of the various vineyards, and combining their different qualities, thus presents us with his perfected whole in the shape of that modern triumph of the oenological art, the bottle of champagne.

The white grape is cultivated because it gives a light wine, which readily effervesces. It is therefore an element in all champagnes, but enters more largely into the cheaper ones, intended for popular consumption. The vulgar taste is always pleased with and influenced by froth. The judicious few insist upon more substantial qualities. The choicer elements of the best champagnes are derived from the black grape, which gives all the solid vinous qualities.

The skilled taste of the wine manufacturer distinguishes even the lightest shades of difference between the various products of the black grape, and is never content with a mixture which does not combine the peculiar qualities of all. The character of the grape depends less upon the origin of the vine than upon the soil in which it is grown, and it would seem that the flavor of the product is affected by the slightest change. The wine of Pierry (from *pierreux*, stony), for example, has a very perceptible taste of gun flints (I state it on the best vinous authority), which abounds in the chalky soil of its vineyards. This *gout de pierre à fusil* is so emphatic as to distinguish the wine of Pierry prominently from that of its nearest neighbors.

## CHAPTER X.

The Wonderful Season of 1865—Hopes and Fears of Wine-Growers—The Vintage—A Trip to Verzenay—From Rheims into the Country—A Still Scene—Monsieur Jacquesson and his Projects—Sillery—A Comic Opera Scene.

THE summer and autumn of the year 1865 were the most remarkable seasons ever known to the “oldest inhabitant” of temperate Europe. Days of bright suns and clear skies followed each other in almost constant succession ; weeks passed, and sometimes months, without the one being hardly obscured by a passing cloud, or the other tempered by a falling shower.

The soil had drunk deep of a plentiful moisture from the bounteous rains of spring, and filled the vegetation with a rich nutriment. A plentiful sap circulated throughout every growing plant, and its delicate vessels and tender skin were ready to burst with distension. The swollen buds, succeeded by a vigorous growth of wood and foliage, and a gross but a yet immature fruit, were contemplated by every cultivator with mingled hope and fear. His hope was in the chance of a hot and dry summer and a benign autumn ; these he knew would secure

for him an unexampled wealth of harvest. His fear was in the chance of a cold wet summer and a stormy autumn. These he knew would give him a continued growth of the forward spring, and though an abundant, an unripe and rotting crop.

The summer and autumn were favorable beyond his hopes. They were, in fact, such seasons of ripening power as could alone have matured a superabundance of vitality, which threatened undue precocity and consequent decay. The summer and autumn of 1865 were even superfluously generous of their favoring influences. "Ceres and Pomona were so vivified," said a local French poet, "by the constant embraces of the fervid Phœbus, that they even transcended the laws of their nature, and gave birth to an immediate succession of issue." In plain English, plants, vines, and fruit-trees gave double and even treble crops. It was no uncommon thing to find a vine bearing at the same time grapes ready to be plucked, those of a subsequent growth not yet ripe, blossoms in full flower, and shooting buds.

Wine-growers, like most of those engaged in the cultivation of the land, whose success depends upon the ever fluctuating changes of the seasons, are an anxious race. Not knowing what a day may bring forth, they can never repose in the enjoyment of the sun of the present, for they are disquieted by the fear of the storm of to-morrow.

When the sun, however, continued to shine day

after day during the famous summer and autumn of 1865, the anxious wine-grower of Champagne even became confident, although I met, here and there, some such confirmed doubters that they were unwilling to put their faith in fine weather, however constant, and would darken its cheerful brightness with a foreboding of a hail-storm.

The wine-growers, however, in spite of their habitual querulousness, yielded gradually to the constant and irresistible influences of the sunny season.

The hot and clear weather continuing without abatement throughout the summer, the grapes were ready to be plucked at the end of August and the beginning of September. The vintage had begun some three weeks earlier than usual. Every one was in a joyous humour, and talked of the abundance and excellence of the crop. It is difficult for those who have not lived in an agricultural or wine-growing country to conceive the animated happiness produced by a prosperous harvest. The exhilaration is universal, and heightened by the usual uncertainties and frequent disappointments attendant upon the cultivation of the soil. It is as if every man had drawn a prize in a lottery which often gives nothing but blanks.

Inspired by the general cheerfulness, with an interest in the vintage, and curious as a stranger to learn its conduct, I readily accepted the invitation of a young wine-merchant of Rheims to accom-

pany him to Verzenay, then in the fullness of its harvest.

It was on the morning of the 8th of September, 1865,—said to be the hottest day ever known in the country,—that my friend came rattling over the cobble stones of the solitary court-yard of the *Hôtel du Lion d'Or* in search of me. He had a hamper of his best *vin mousseux*, he said, in the vehicle, and I contributed a package of cigars and some ice, warmly wrapped in a bit of old carpet, from the stores of the hotel, to the provisions for that day, the heat of which required every possible alleviation.

Though tempered in hotter climates, I had no sooner driven out of the sombre hotel and the deep shade of the great Cathedral, by which it has been darkened for ages, than I was conscious that the temperature of Rheims even could occasionally rise to a height to test the endurance of the most sun-baked.

My companion had provided himself at the livery-stable with a shabby and shaky turn-out, a one-horse affair, in fact. It was certainly an unpretending establishment, with its joints enfeebled by time and use, and its springs bent and relaxed by the weight of age. It made, however, too great a noise in the world for its modest pretensions as it rumbled over the big paving stones of the town. We startled the pretty maidens in bright ribboned caps and vari-colored zouave jackets, thronging the narrow streets with great rolls of woollen cloth

under each arm, on their way to and from the woollen factories; we brought to the doors of the *cafés* their idle frequenters, followed by the *garçons* in white aprons and with flowing napkins; we called to each shop-door and house-window neat dames and untidy females, in every variety of costume and *deshabille*; and arrested at every corner the attention of gaping soldiers and inquisitive *gens d'armes*. The streets of Rheims, though Rheims is a large and thriving town of some sixty thousand inhabitants, are generally so quiet, and passing equipages of all kinds so rare, that one has only to drive through its streets to secure the universal observation of their secluded but curious inhabitants.

Our horse was in character with the shabby and decrepit vehicle he trailed slowly after him. He was, said my companion, *doux* and *sage*, and he proved both gentle and discreet, always prudently walking up the hills, and not viciously running away down them. We could thus let the reins fall upon his haunches, and leave him to jog along at his discretion, while we drank our champagne, smoked our cigars, and surveyed the country. My companion modestly apologized for the shabbiness of horse and carriage, saying that every bit of horse-flesh that had life enough in it to move was on the go, and each thing made to carry was in requisition in consequence of the *vendange* and the *chasse*, for the shooting had opened with the vintage. He deemed himself, he said, fortunate on

that busy day in getting what he had got, unstylish as he acknowledged both beast and wagon to be.

Making our noisy way through the quiet streets of the old town, and obtaining more notice than we solicited or desired, we passed through the handsome iron gate of the city, saluted politely by its liveried guardians in great cocked hats, into a broad avenue planted on either side with poplars.

We were now out into the country with great stretches of cultivated fields on all sides, which, however, looked bare and uninteresting, as there was neither a fence, a hedge, or a tree to vary the dull uniformity. There was so little life moving that the view of a single sportsman, who, with the aid of a dog, was working a stubble, seemed as unreal to me as a picture.

After toiling in the hot sun up a hill, and reaching the top, we could see on looking back the great Cathedral, which, with its massive grandeur, dominates the whole town, the buildings of which seem so diminutive and insignificant in comparison, that the eye hardly heeds them. This noble structure rises so high and extends so wide, that the graceful columns of its unfinished spires, its audacious flying buttresses, its lofty eaves, and the solid mass of the great body of the edifice, can be seen miles away.

Before us, as we jog along on our route, the land becomes more undulating, and rises gradually in the distance into hills. There are the vineyards,



and among other towns and villages, Verzenay, the object of our journey, eight miles distant from Rheims.

On reaching the rising ground our view proportionately extended, and the country naturally appeared more varied. The carefully planted poplars marked the course of the sluggish canal, upon which great boats were being dragged with toilsome effort. The languid Vesle was glistening here and there in the light of the sun, where not shaded by the scant and scrubby shrubbery of its banks. But the stretch of desert-like and unfenced fields was still the predominating feature of the landscape, though its uniformity was now more often relieved by an occasional windmill and some scattered farm-houses. A solitary shepherd could be seen now and then *leading* (for in France sheep are led and not driven) his flock to a fresh pasture, or watching it as it browsed upon some uninclosed field.

The road, in the jockey's sense, was perfect; nothing could be smoother and better adapted for wheel and hoof. Like all the French highways, it was wide, direct, and most carefully tended. The white chalk, however, of which it was mainly formed, threw the reflection of the hot sun full into our faces, and almost blinded our eyes.

The quietude of the country was surprising. There was hardly a sound but the shrill whistle, heard but for a moment, of the rushing railway engine. This told the story probably of the ex-

cessive stillness of the old highway. The railway had absorbed all the trade of traffic and pleasure.

No buildings were to be seen by the roadside, except at rare intervals an inhospitable-looking tavern of gray stone, with no more grace of outline than the house a child draws upon his slate. These stood bare, without a tree to shade them, or a vine or a shrub to mitigate their staring aspect. Veritable bushes hung over the door of each of them; and in spite of the old proverb that "Good wine needs no bush," I thought that such ungenial structures required every possible indication of any good cheer they might have to offer.

But few vehicles were met on the road, and only as we approached the vineyards, when an occasional long, narrow cart came lumbering along.

Each of these carried a lengthened row of barrels filled with juice just pressed from freshly-plucked grapes. This was being carried to the depots of the manufacturers of Rheims, in whose purgatorial cellars it was destined to lie until it should spiritualize itself by its own inward force, and finally be converted into wine. Conscious of the delicacy of their charge, the cartmen had taken care to cover the barrels with tarpaulins, or thick layers of green leaves, to shield them from the hot sun.

On approaching Sillery, we passed through the extensive but abortive vineyards of the great landed proprietor and wine manufacturer, Jacquesson. A resolute projector, he is ever experimenting, but

hitherto with no gain to the public and a great loss to himself. With a theory peculiar to his own busy conception, he plants his vines in deep trenches, which gives his vineyards the appearance of great celery beds.

As hail-storms are frequent in that neighborhood, and often terribly destructive, M. Jaquesson has devised a contrivance for the security of his property which we should deem less certain than an insurance in some of the many companies of France, which include among the risks they take that of damage by hail-storms. He has erected low posts along the edges of his vine-fields, and has placed wide boards at hand, with the view of placing them on these posts, and thus roofing over his threatened crops in case of a shower of hail. As such showers come suddenly, and fall so partially as often to crush the grapes of one field to stones, while they do not touch a leaf of another by its side, it is difficult to conceive how Monsieur Jaquesson, with all his foresight and his numerous gang of laborers, can give effect to his elaborate and expensive device. I was not therefore astonished to hear that the proprietor had already absorbed, in his vain struggle with the elements and his numerous other experiments, a large portion of the goodly fortune he had inherited from his father.

The land, moreover, of Sillery and its immediate neighborhood lies too low, and is too wet for the cultivation of the grape. The product is accord-

ingly valueless, notwithstanding the labor and expense bestowed upon it by its enterprising and prodigal proprietor.

The reputation which has been attached so long to Sillery belongs entirely to its neighbor, Verzenay, the wine-hills of which commence just at the termination of the plain on which the former lies.

We now pass through Sillery, with its half-dozen or so of houses huddled together in the shade of the chateau of Monsieur Jacquesson. This brightly-painted structure, with its toy-like turrets, its pretty castellated artifices, and its trim surroundings of vines, flowers, shrubs, and stunted trees, has quite the look of a scene in a comic opera. The shaded stream, which trickles through the shallow basin in which the little hamlet lies, and over which a prettily sculptured stone bridge has been thrown, and even the gray stone houses, though by no means comely,—being partly hid by a group of willows,—together with the diminutiveness of the whole place, and everything in it, add to the effect.

Leaving Sillery, we ascend the hill, and are among the vineyards of Verzenay.

## CHAPTER XI.

At Verzenay—Among the Vineyards—A Cheerful Scene of Labor—A Near View of the Vintagers—The Vintagers at Work—The Grapes at the Wine-Presses—The Wine-Pressing—The Grape Juice—Supervision of Wine Manufacturers—The Mayor in Working-day Suit—A Taste of the Grapes—A Luscious Feast—Kind of Grapes—Comparison of Vintages—Growing Excitement—Departure from Verzenay.

AS we drove up the hill into Verzenay, we were surrounded on all sides by the vineyards. These rolled, in regular succession of green wave, to the right and left, as far as the eye could reach. The color of the foliage of the vines, was, however, toned by that of their supports of oak. The light-purple hue of these, brightened by the sun, threw over the undulating but uniform surface of green a warm blush, and gave to the wide stretch of vineyard the appearance of a Scotch moor in the full bloom of its heather.

Every hill was alive with busy vintagers, who, crouched among the low vines, were moving quick in their work. The road was thronged with carts, donkeys, and laborers, passing with empty and loaded baskets to and from the vineyards. Groups of men,

women, and children were gathered along the edges of the field, and were intent upon their various occupations. Some were sorting the fruit, some filling and emptying, and others lifting great baskets to the patient backs of man and beast.

It was a cheerful scene of labor, but there was nothing in it to remind me of the many vintages I had beheld in the gas-light of the Comic Opera. I neither recognized the plumed cap, velvet doublet, pink hose, and silver buckles of my stage acquaintance; nor the elaborate coiffure, diamond cross-laced petticoat, the well-filled and extensively displayed silk stockings, and high, red-heeled little shoes of his sweetheart. There was no love-making as far as I could see, and I certainly heard no one singing songs composed by Verdi or Donizetti.

I saw nothing but a great number of course laborers hard at work. There was nothing in their dress to distinguish them from the same class in any other part of the world. They were all in their working-day suits,—the men in shirt sleeves and straw or felt hats, and the women in tow-cloth petticoats and ugly coal-scuttle bonnets. There was great quietude and deep devotion to work. I could see that the laborers were in earnest; and it was not surprising, for most of them, being proprietors, were working for themselves. The only picturesque objects were the donkeys munching their food, with their noses in a bag,—for there was no thistle or any weed, or even a blade of grass, at

the roadside. The wine-grower takes care that not a particle of soil shall be lost, and he is the cleanest as well as the most industrious and economical of cultivators.

After making our way with some difficulty through the narrow streets of the village of Verzenay, unusually thronged with a crowd of carriages and carts and people, brought thither by the vintage, we found by good luck a spare place under a decayed shed for our tired horse.

Verzenay is situate toward the summit of a hill, from which you look down upon declivity after declivity of vineyard. It contains about five hundred houses and twelve hundred inhabitants, each one of whom is an owner of land, and all are thriving. There is not a poor man in the place, and as the notice I saw everywhere displayed, "*La mendicité est défendue dans Verzenay*," indicated, begging is not even permitted.

Strolling down the hill I had a nearer view of the vintagers whom I had passed in driving up to Verzenay, and could learn something of the details of their work. Men, women, and boys were passing regularly along the rows of vines, plucking the grapes. Each one carried an ordinary market-basket of osier, which hung by its handle on his arm, while with a hooked knife (called a *serpette*) held in his right hand he cut off the bunches of grapes and placed them carefully in it. The basket when full, was emptied into a larger one at the roadside, and the laborer returned to his work of plucking.

The grapes thus gathered were now sorted by a group of women and girls seated around a tray of open wicker work, like the cover of a gigantic basket. These pull off the decayed, unripe, crushed, or otherwise spoiled grapes which are allowed to fall through the interstices of the tray into a receptacle below, while the bunches thus purified are carefully put into panniers, which when filled are lifted upon the patient donkeys and borne into Verzenay.

No grapes are used in making what is termed first-class wine that have not been thoroughly examined and sifted of all spoiled and inferior fruit. The latter, however, especially if of a famous vintage, like that of 1865, is not lost, but used to make ordinary wine, or to distill into common brandies.

The grapes, on reaching Verzenay, are immediately taken to the wine-presses and pressed. The whole product of the vintage has already been sold some weeks before its commencement to the chief wine manufacturers of the country, who are all obliged to buy their grapes. Some of them, it is true, have vineyards of their own, but not of sufficient extent or in such positions to supply them with the quantities and qualities of grape they require.

The product being thus the property of the manufacturers, is carried at once to their wine-presses at Verzenay. When the baskets arrive, they are emptied into a great wooden measure, called a



*caque*, which is roughly estimated to hold one hundred and twenty pounds weight. Each proprietor brings in his supply himself, and eagerly watches the measurement of his load. As each measure is filled, a tally is kept by half a dozen at the same time, in the rudest way, by chalk-marks on the door-posts or on a convenient cask lying near.

There is an old saying in Champagne, that when they cry "thief," every one at Verzenay takes to his heels. *Lors qu'on crie "au voleur," tout le monde de Verzenay se sauve.* I was not surprised, therefore, to find that an old woman—rough, blowzy, and dirty, it is true, but, as I was told, a landed proprietor in her own right, and with a product of her vineyard of forty panniers at least, or two hundred dollars worth of grapes, that year—had marked seven, when every one else had marked only six baskets as the number she had delivered.

The wine-presses are very much like those used in our country for making cider, although they are never worked, like the latter, by horses. As different classes of wine are obtained according to the degree of pressure, this can only be properly regulated by the discreet force of men's hands.

As soon as the *caque* or measure is filled, its weight estimated, and its number marked, it is emptied on the floor of the wine-press. These wine-presses can hold from five to ten thousand pounds of grapes at a time. When their floors are well covered, the fruit is first trampled down with

the feet and smoothed into a uniform layer about two feet and a half thick. This is covered with planks, and the machine being adjusted, its pressure is carefully applied. The grapes are thrown in in bunches with their stalks. The *tannin* which the latter contain is deemed an essential element of the wine, as it gives solidity to it and renders it durable.

The juice flows into a gutter at the base of the press, and thence through a spout, guarded, to prevent the escape of the skins and pulps, by a large wicker basket, through which it passes into the tub or vat below. From this it is dipped out with buckets and poured into ordinary wine barrels, if it is to be moved to a distance, or if to remain stationary, into large hogsheads.

The juice of the first and second pressures is alone used for the manufacture of the finest champagne; that of the third for the inferior grades; and the fourth and fifth for ordinary red wines, or for distillation into a common brandy. The juice, as it comes from the press, has a very light-pink color, which it loses entirely in the course of its fermentation. Thus the red or black grape, without the use of any artificial means of bleaching, produces the clear amber-colored champagne wine we all admire. Great care must be taken, however, to keep the juice of the red grape free from the skins and pulp.

The refuse of the grapes is left by the pressure in the form of a solid cake about a half a foot in

thickness. This is either cut with a spade into small square blocks, and dried for fuel, or broken up and mixed with stable manure, to fertilize the vine-fields.

The vintage, which generally lasts at least a fortnight, is carefully watched and superintended by the wine manufacturer. He is present during the whole time, and keeps his eye upon every detail of the operation,—the plucking and assorting of the grapes, the weighing and recording of the measurement, the pressing in all its degrees, and the filling of the barrels. He is not willing to intermit his daily carefulness until the delicate fluid is safely cellared in his establishment at Rheims, Epernay, or elsewhere. When it is said that if a few crumbs of bread should fall among the grapes, they would, by the fermentation of the gluten they contain, produce ammonia, and spoil the flavor of the wine, the necessity of watchfulness can be appreciated. The laborers accordingly are expected to refrain from taking their meals near the grapes destined for the wine-press.

Some of the large manufacturers have small villas by the side of their wine-presses at Verzenay, where they remove with their families, and remain during the vintage. I saw the great man of Rheims, its mayor and *député*, and the chief partner of the house of Veuve Clicquot, busily superintending the work in his wine-press. He was so disguised in shabby working-day suit and

apron that I hardly recognized him. I could see at the same time, as I accosted him among his vats and barrels, his wife and maid plucking flowers from the bright parterres of the pretty cottage near by, and in the stable-yard a grand emblazoned carriage and well-fed coachman and liveried varlets lounging about.

I was invited everywhere to partake of the grapes, of which baskets brimming full surrounded me on all sides, and I did so freely. As I saw the luscious fruit had attracted the honey-sucking bees in swarming multitudes, I at first hesitated to share their tempting feasts; but after several timid attempts, finding that I was unharmed, I became more bold, and thrust my hand into the abounding heaps with confidence. The bees seemed so sated with sweetness that they had become too kindly to wound, or so intoxicated with the vinous ferment of the fruit that they wanted the power, if they had the inclination, to sting.

The grape is of the Pinot\* variety, a small round one, of a deep purple color. Its taste was almost too sweet and luscious, and I felt after gorging

\* The varieties of black or red grape generally cultivated are the *Morillon* and *Pinot*: those of the white are the "golden plants of Ay" and the *Epinetes*. From these alone is manufactured the best champagne wine. In addition to these there are the *Gouens*, called in the country *Marmot*, which produce a white grape, and the *Meuniers* and the *Fromentis*, whose fruit is red. These latter give only an inferior wine, consumed in the country.

myself with it that I was almost sated to sickness. I was especially recommended to try the small shrivelled grapes, which had already been dried into raisins by the excessive heat of the season. These were even more sweet than the others.

I recollect that on tasting the grapes of the same vineyards, but of the subsequent vintage, that they were so acrid and astringent that I could not swallow them. Such was the difference between the effect of the sunny season of 1865 and that of the cold rainy one of 1866. The crop of the latter year was, though abundant, so poor in quality that not a manufacturer who cared for the reputation of his wine would buy a solitary 'grape of it. Not a bottle of good champagne wine can ever be made of the meagre, acrid juice of that vintage. It will, however, be probably mixed with better liquor, or so smothered with syrup or puffed up with gas by a plentiful ferment as to disguise its original defects, and be sold by makers of inferior character as the best of champagne. There will be drinkers, too, who, satisfied with pop and sweetness, will be content with the noise, gas, and sugar they will get for their money. All good judges, however, with their suspicions excited by the excessive sweetness and effervescence, will probably be contented with a single sip, or if disposed to make further experiment, will soon discover, on trial, the thinness and crudity of the fluid, and its total want of all vinous

quality. It will have the strength of brandy, for this will be plentifully added, but it will not have the body and flavor of wine.

Every one was talking of the excellence of the vintage; and there was not a man, woman, or child in Verzenay who was not rejoicing in the successful result. Grapes had never brought so high an amount, having been sold at about twelve dollars and twenty cents the *caque* of one hundred and twenty pounds, or ten cents per pound, nearly double the average price. The people of Verzenay, some twelve hundred in all, had divided among them about two millions of francs, or four hundred thousand dollars, which they received for the superb crop of 1865. Thus each adult, male and female, of the place, had pocketed on an average three hundred and thirty-three dollars, and every one was swelling with the consciousness of wealth. The whole product of the vineyards of Verzenay, if those which belong to the great manufacturers are included, was estimated at the value of six or seven hundred thousand dollars.

Though the vintage was equally good in all parts of La Champagne, the grapes grown in Verzenay, producing the wine which is the main constituent of that combination known as *vin mousseux* (champagne wine), are always in the greatest demand, and accordingly bring the highest prices. The *caque* of one hundred and twenty pounds, which sold at Verzenay for six francs, was bought elsewhere

for forty and forty-five. It takes forty *caques* to make six ordinary barrels of juice; so each, of Verzenay grape, cost four hundred francs or eighty dollars!

The knowing ones said that the wine of 1865 would compare with that of 1822 for precocity, with that of 1849 for quantity, and with that of 1846 for quality. There had never been, since 1811, a grape so ripe, so sugary, and one harvested under such favorable circumstances of weather. It was agreed, however, that the juice of 1865, excellent as it was, would never be such as was obtained in the exceptional comet year of 1857, and which is the basis of the celebrated wine of 1858, the best ever made. The grape of 1865 was said to have been too rapidly matured by the hot sun, and consequently too replete with sugar to have the delicate qualities of the more slowly developed fruit of 1857.

Still beset with memories of the opera house, I asked if the day was not to close with the feast and dance, but I was answered that all were so wearied with their work that they would seek at early sundown repose in unromantic slumber.

Toward evening, however, whether it was the effect of the vapor of the new wine which filled the atmosphere, or the drinking of the old which flowed freely everywhere, or merely the natural exhilaration which comes with the satisfaction of having completed a hard day's labor, I observed a growing

excitement. Men and women were arguing loudly and energetically, and the rude swains were philandering with and kissing the "sunburnt daughters of labor."

I found myself, too, becoming the object of a warmth of affection I would have preferred to dispense with. Brawny arms, stained red with wine to the shoulder, were wound about my neck, and stuffy hands sticky with grape juice thrust into my grasp.

As the sun began to set we took our departure from Verzenay, inspired by the cheering influences of the prosperous vintage of 1865, which will be freshly remembered for years to come in the flowing cups of every jovial and grateful son of Bacchus.



## CHAPTER XII.

The Must in the Wine Manufactories—The Wine Establishments—Convents and Monasteries—The Awakened Spirits of Jolly Monks—Old Vaults—The Arrangement and Structure of Wine Manufactories—Tasting Room—Cellars—A Subterranean Visit.

WE follow to the establishment of the wine manufacturer the barrels of freshly obtained juice—the must, as it is called in English, and *mout* in French—which we have seen flowing from the wine-presses of Verzenay, Ay, Epernay, or elsewhere, and which has been expressed from the grape as soon as it was plucked.

The must is nauseously sweet to the taste, and although it has no vinous flavor and is still unfermented, has an intoxicating effect if freely drunk. Its color, if obtained by a first or second quick pressure from the black or purple grape, has a slight pink hue, but if from the white, a light straw-color.

The wine manufacturer having collected the fresh juice obtained from the grapes, which he has purchased some weeks before the vintage from a multitude of the small proprietors of vineyards throughout all that part of Champagne where the

fruit is grown, stores it in his manufactory, and leaves it to repose there until it is ready for the manifold operations it has to undergo, before it is converted into that sparkling and exhilarating beverage, which we all welcome in its lively flow from a genuine bottle of *Chicquot* or *Consular Seal*.

The establishments of the wine manufacturers are to be found at Rheims, Epernay, Chalons, Ay, Mareuil sur Ay, and in other towns of that portion of the province of *La Champagne* where the choicest grapes are grown. They abound most, however, at Rheims.

The wine manufactories are generally large structures extending over a wide space above, and through a great stretch of vault and passage-way below ground. The establishments at Rheims, though among the most important, have not the architectural pretensions of those at Epernay, where some of the great wine-merchants, as Moët & Chandon and Piper & Co., possess enormous stone structures, which, with their wide portals, crowned with armorial bearings, and their pillars and cornices adorned with sculptured ornaments, have the stateliness of palaces. Those at Rheims are mostly antique buildings, many of which had served as monasteries and convents when the ancient town was held close in the embrace of old Mother Church, whose arms extended wide in this seat of ecclesiastical power, and grasped the best in the country.

With the succession of political change and revolutions, and consequent contempt of clergy, abbés, monks, and nuns were ousted without pity, and their luxurious domains confiscated. In the progress of the development of the champagne wine-trade during the last fifty years, its thriving conductors have become possessed of many of these, and turned them into places of business. Finding below ground the convenient bed of chalk which underlies all the town and the neighboring country, they have bored it in every direction into vaults to store their choice product.

In the course of these excavations the wine manufacturers have, not seldom, found that their holy predecessors had anticipated them, and discovered cellars already made ages before, some possibly for the deposit of wines, of which all good monks had a stock of the best the country then afforded, and some for crypts for sacred retirement and prayer, and others for dungeons for the punishment and repentance of a recreant brother, or for tombs for the dead. These cavernous chambers now echo with the modern pop of the champagne bottle; and it is to be supposed, as it proclaims the flow of generous wine, that the novel sound, if it awake the spirit of dead abbé or monk, whether he died with a prayer or a curse upon his lips, will not be unwelcome to him, for, saint or sinner, he was of a jovial brotherhood.

In the neighborhood of that famous and ancient

church, Saint Remi, on the outskirts of the city, there are some caves said to be two thousand years old. They accordingly were never bored by mole-eyed monk. They were discovered some years ago by a wine manufacturer while examining the ground preparatory to making excavations for his cellars. He found the work already done, and to an extent far beyond any possible want. They are a hundred and ten in number, all cut out of the solid chalk, and capable of holding ten millions of bottles of champagne. Though there is a great diversity of opinion, most antiquaries suppose that they were the quarries from which the original builders of Rheims obtained the material for the construction of the town.

There are still in the sculptured ornaments of the exterior of these ancient structures, and in the carved wainscotings and religious paintings of the interiors, evidences of their former sacred uses. They are now, however, for the most part sadly stained with wine, and otherwise injured by bacchanalian desecrations.

The manufacturers have generally their dwelling-places, their counting-houses, and their manufactories, if not in the same building, within the same inclosure, and their cellars below, but extending far beyond under the streets and the neighboring houses.

Though many of these structures are very old, and have a more or less decrepit look, the wealthy

manufacturers have succeeded by dint of expense in securing for themselves tolerably comfortable residences, where they live luxuriously, and entertain, especially their best customers, generously.

The wine manufactories are divided generally into four stories, two above and two below ground. There are the garret, the ground-floor, and two subterranean compartments, one beneath the other. The counting-house and the tasting-room are either on the ground-floor, or in a contiguous building. Each compartment has its especial use. The *bureau* or counting-room is generally well filled with a goodly number, mostly *polyglot* Germans, who are ready to address you in any language, whether your mother-tongue be English, Russian, Spanish, or Italian. There are ordinarily two partners or chief managers, one of whom superintends the commerce, and the other the manufacture, of the wine. There is a desk for each in the counting-house, but that of one is generally vacant, for he to whom it belongs is the superintendent of the manufactory, and is away among the vineyards buying, or in the tasting-room experimenting, or in the *cellier* superintending the mixing, dosing, and corking; or in the *cave* selecting; or in the packing-room overlooking the adorning and packing of the bottles which are being prepared for market.

The tasting-room is generally composed of two compartments, an outer and an inner one. In the former alone customers are received. The latter is

the *sanctum* of the wine manufacturer, kept mysteriously closed from common view, though a quick eye may perchance obtain a stolen glance and catch a sight of a range of suspicious looking utensils and labeled vials, very suggestive of the apothecary shop, and the least sensitive nose will be sure to snuff up a very strong indication of the brandy distillery. In this secret chamber are concocted the mystic liquors used for dosing. Into the more public compartment of the tasting-room the customer is always brought to taste the wines. These are poured out from bottles containing the different kinds into a range of the long old-fashioned champagne glasses, called *flutes*, and are tasted one after the other in often repeated succession, both by customer and manufacturer. The latter, after he has sipped the wine and turned it about awhile in his mouth to bring it into contact with the whole tongue, but especially with its root and the palate, where the sense of taste is the most discriminating, prudently ejects it. The customer, with a mouth not so often tempted by such seductive draughts, and being either incapable, or not under the necessity of exercising the same self-denial, will probably swallow down incontinently the full contents of each successive glass.

The *cellier*, though our word cellar comes from it, is in the French sense a mere place of deposit, and not necessarily subterranean. In the wine manufactories it is on the ground-floor, and forms what

is called in French the *rez-de-chaussée*. It is well-ventilated with numerous windows, and has no floor or covering to the ground. As it communicates freely with the outer air, its temperature varies but little from that of the surrounding atmosphere. It is consequently colder in winter and hotter in summer than the cellars below, whose temperature is nearly constant. In the *cellier* are seen the great vats in which the mixture of the different wines is made. In it are conducted most of the operations necessary in the manufacture of champagne, and its preparation for market. To it are brought, from time to time, out of the depths below, any of the delicate offspring of the grape which may require change of air and temperature. Thus a wine chilled to torpor may be warmed into a fermenting fervor, or one heated to a dangerous excess of effervescence cooled down to a safe quietude. It is very important in the manufacture of a wine, of which gas is an essential element, whose development is so much influenced by heat and cold, that there should be means of regulating its temperature. The manufacturers have accordingly, in the arrangement of their establishments, made provision for such. From the garret to the lowest cellar there is every variation required.

In the *grenier*, or loft, to which we ascend for a passing glance of its contents, we find big bags of corks, and all the stores necessary for the provision of the establishment. The cork branders are there,

chiefly women, who are busy over their alcoholic lamps. Empty bottles, too, are sometimes stored in the *grenier*, but more often under sheds in the court-yard, where they lie in great heaps ready for the rinsers when the drawing off of the wine takes place.

Below the *cellier* are two ranges of subterranean cellars, or *caves*, as they are called by the French. The upper one is about twenty feet, and the lower forty, or even sixty feet sometimes, below the surface of the ground. Lighting gigantic tallow candles standing in great tin candlesticks, with wide basins or bottom to catch the sputtering grease, we cautiously descend the long stone steps which lead to the regions below. If it be summer we should take the advice of our polite guide, and carefully button our coats and wrap our handkerchiefs about our necks, for we shall soon become tremblingly conscious of the change to a cooler temperature. If it should be winter we shall be no less conscious of the comparative warmth below, and probably unbutton or take off our heavy overcoats.

All, in these cavernous compartments, is dank with the moisture dripping from the humid walls of chalk, which feel slimy to the touch. The feet slip over the floors, not only wet with the natural humidity of the place, but by the wine which has flowed from the broken bottles. There is a mingled odor of earthiness and wine, combining the



fustiness of the one and the aroma of the other. There is universal darkness, except where our sputtering flambeaus extend their contracted circles of glimmering light. By this alone we make our way along the lengthened passages, and see rising above our heads from the floor the thick layers of bottles which are heaped up on each side, and seem to stretch before and behind us for miles.

Bottles are lying by thousands in every variety of attitude, some horizontally, some diagonally, and others vertically. Some are in racks, and others merely heaped up together without any but their own support. All are, however, arranged in order and numbered, and the age and quality of each carefully recorded on wooden labels. Many bottles have upon their sides a great daub of whitewash, and we may see perhaps some workmen giving them one after the other, a knowing shake, and changing their position. Our guide takes a bottle here and there, and holding it to the light of his candle, points out to us a muddy sediment, clouding thick one of the sides if it has been lying horizontally, or if it has been in a diagonal or vertical position, filling the neck and resting upon the cork. There are here and there on the floor, or clinging to the racks, fragments of bottles broken by the force of the gas. They give out generally at the bottom, which falls off as smoothly as if cut with some sharp instrument.

The lower *cave* or cellar is deeper, darker, cooler,

and more damp, but in its arrangements there is nothing to distinguish it from the upper.

All the various compartments communicate with each other, not only by the doorways and steps, but by trap-doors, through which the wine is passed up and down, and by ventilators for the regulation of the air and temperature.

The large manufactories generally open upon a court-yard, which is closed by a great gate called a *porte cochère*, and there are sometimes within the inclosure pretty, but formal gardens of the French type, with *kiosques*, where I have often been invited in the summer season to share a bottle of champagne of famous vintage.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Manufacture of Champagne Wine—Marriage of Wines—The *Cuvée*—Test of Sugar—A Delicate Operation—Careful Nursing—Drawing Off—Raw Wine—Effervescence—Breakage—Change of Temperature—Effect of Age on Champagne.

WE left the freshly expressed juice of the grape, the must, in the *cellier* of the manufactory where it had been carried in the barrels into which it was poured from the reservoir of the wine-press. Five or six, perhaps seven, different vine-growing districts have each contributed a supply of their best product. There are probably barrels of the juice of the red grapes of Verzenay, Bouzy, Ay, and Epernay, and certainly some of the white of Cramant or its neighborhood; for the last, having a particularly strong disposition to effervesce, is deemed an essential ingredient in the composition of what is known by us as champagne wine, the *vin mousseux* of the French.

We shall now accompany the must of the various vintages, which we have tasted and found of a sickish taste, throughout its various natural transformations, and the manifold artificial processes to which it is subjected, until it is finally converted

into the pleasing and cheering beverage which flows so sparkingly and promptly from the champagne bottle.

After a repose of some weeks, the juices of the various vintages are mixed together in a great vat. The fluid has already purged itself *il s'est débourbé* (it has cleansed itself of mud), as the manufacturer says, and flows out limpid and almost colorless. That, however, coming from the red grape may still have a slight pink hue, like the dying reflection of the setting sun in a pure stream ; while the juice of the white grape retains but the slightest lunar tinge of its yellow color.

This mixing, or *marriage* of the different wines, as it is called, but which is technically known as a *cuvée*, is the most important of all the various operations. It was the great discovery of the jovial Benedictine monk, Dom Perignon, to whom, as has already been recorded, we are indebted for the existence of champagne wine. There is no manufacturer who ever dispenses with making a *cuvée*, or who even thinks it possible that veritable champagne can be made without it.

The juice of the white grape has not only qualities distinct from that of the red, but each variety of the latter has its own peculiar properties. The former gives a wine which effervesces more strongly, and the red grape generally one that has more body, greater fineness, an intenser spirit, and a more vigorous constitution. These qualities, more-

over, vary in degree in the separate products of each vineyard and of different vintages.

Though the manufacturer, with his little instrument called a *glucometer* (from the Greek γλυκός, sweet, and μέτρον, measure), which he is always using, has a means, together with the ordinary methods of analysis of the chemist, of testing the quantity of sugar and of other tangible constituents, he has to rely solely upon his sense of taste and smell for the detection of the not less important but more immaterial properties of his wine. What he terms *bouquet*, or perfume and fineness, is only to be discerned by the nose, tongue, and palate. And how acute must such organs be in the expert taster, who, with a sip and a scent, will distinguish the gun-flint flavor of the wine of Pierry, in which I, with the best will in the world, and with no slight experience, could detect nothing but the usual indications of Bacchus, without the faintest suspicion of the presence of Mars.

The manufacturer, having thoroughly made his tests by sense and instrument, knows, or thinks he knows, the distinctive qualities of each kind of juice, and makes his mixture or *cuvée* accordingly. He thus gets, or tries to get, the proper equilibrium of fineness, effervescence, body, and spirit which he believes to be essential to the desired result—good champagne.

The composition of the *cuvées* varies each year, according to the character of the vintages of the

different places. If that of Cramant fails, for example, and that of Vizey should succeed, the latter is substituted for the former, or *vice versa*.

The products of the different vineyards having been poured into the great vat, are thoroughly mixed with a long pole armed with cross-pieces of wood. This operation completed, the fluid is drawn off into hogsheads containing each about forty-four gallons, called *tonneaux de tirage*. These are left in the *cellier* for a fortnight or so, until the combined juices they contain have fermented under the influence of the ordinary temperature of the air, which is generally warm,—the usual period of the operation being toward the close of October.

When at the end of about fifteen days, the fermentation is supposed to have changed nearly one half of the sugar which the liquid naturally contains into alcohol and carbonic acid, the *tonneaux de tirage* are sent into the *caves* or cellars under ground. The cooler temperature below arrests the activity of the fermentation. The liquid—or the wine we may call it, for it has now much of its vitality and spirit—is then left undisturbed until January.

In this month the wine is tested with the *glucometer*, and the quantity of natural sugar it contains carefully ascertained. If it has too much, which seldom or never occurs, a less saccharine wine must be mixed with it. If it has not enough, which is generally the case, a proper quantity of

the candied sugar of the cane, and never any other is put into it. All other kinds, even the purest white, whether made from cane-juice or beet-root, are said to *poison* the wine, giving it an easily detected, nauseous flavour. The sugar being the sole source of the carbonic acid gas, as well as of the alcohol of champagne wine, if there should be too little there will be no effervescence; if there should be too much, the strongest bottles would not be strong enough to withstand the enormous pressure of the excess of gas it would generate.

A champagne wine properly constituted should contain at least twenty grammes (310 grs.) of sugar in each litre (about two pints), and twelve per cent. of alcohol. It is rare, however, that wine comes into the world so favorably proportioned. Champagne is one of the most delicate offsprings of Bacchus, and requires careful nursing, the most gingerly handling, frequent change of air, skillful doctoring, and not a little dosing.

The quantity of natural sugar having been ascertained (*pèser* is the technical term applied to the process), and if deficient, as is usually the case, the want supplied by due proportions of the *sucre candi* of the cane, the wine still contained in the hogs-heads, or *tonneaux de tirage*, is left in the *cave* or first cellar under ground. Here it is kept while fermenting gently until the period of bottling (*tirage en bouteilles*).

This operation commences in April, and con-

tinues until June. The bottles now used are the same from which the wine is drunk, when finally prepared for drinking. The liquid, as it flows from the hogsheads, is of an uniform amber color, and has somewhat the taste as well as look of an unripe hock wine. If of superior quality, though still green from youth, it will not be unpalatable; if, however, of an inferior grade, it will be found rough, bitter, and astringent, and the taster will be satisfied with the slightest sip from the little shallow basin of silver, holding about a thimbleful, in which it is submitted to his judgment.

The bottles are filled to within an inch or so of their mouths, and then corked. The corks are fastened down with a narrow piece of iron, bent at either end into a hook, which catches under the rim which borders the mouth of each bottle. This fastening, or *agrafe*, has the advantage over iron wire in being more rapidly applied and removed, and in its capability of serving its purpose time and again. The corks used are employed for this purpose only, and are, though sound, of an inferior quality to those contained in the champagne bottles of commerce; for, as we shall see, notwithstanding that the bottles into which the wine has been originally poured are never changed, the corks are.

The bottles thus filled and corked are laid carefully on their sides, and arranged in order in successive lines and layers, supported by thin and narrow pieces of oaken wood placed horizontally.



They thus form, according to the number, more or less long, broad, and high heaps of the utmost regularity and squareness of angle. In the great manufactories their length may extend many hundred feet. Their width is ordinarily from ten to twelve feet, and their height always within reach of a man's arm.

When the wine has been properly made and bottled, its fermentation goes on vigorously, and generally reaches its height in about three weeks. This is a period of great anxiety to the manufacturer, and he watches the development of the effervescence with the utmost solicitude. The power of the gas is sometimes so great that it has been known to break bottles capable of resisting from twenty-eight to thirty-eight atmospheres, thus overcoming an immense force equal to the pressure of five hundred and seventy pounds on each square inch.

The loss from breakage in consequence of the inordinate development of gas is sometimes enormous. In the years 1857 and 1858 it amounted to twenty-five per cent. of the whole wine drawn off. Ten per cent. is the average; and if the manufacturer finds that it falls much below this, he becomes fearful that his wine may be deficient in effervescence, and prove "stale and unprofitable." The general consumer, who is not discriminating in his taste, demands from his bottle of champagne a great deal of noise and froth, and as he is the chief and most remunerative customer, the manufacturer takes

care that he shall have all the explosive force possible. The problem, then, with the caterer to the popular taste, is to produce the greatest possible quantity of gas with the smallest proportion of loss to himself by breakage. The gas is easily produced by an abundant supply of sugar and the application of heat; but the breakage is avoided only by the most vigilant nursing.

When, in the warmer seasons, the manufacturer begins to find, in the course of his constant visits, the floors of his cellars strewn with unusually numerous fragments of glass and wet with wine, he carefully inspects his bottles, and, finding many of them broken and all seething with excessive ferment, he removes them at once to a cooler atmosphere. This he finds in his lower and deeper cellar, where his wine is promptly placed, and its fermentation moderated by the cold. The temperature of the lower or second *cave*, in which the bottles now lie, varies from 40° to 45°; while that of the higher or first *cave*, from which they have been removed, generally ranges between 50° and 55°.

During the cold seasons, on the other hand, the wine may be chilled, and become too torpid to generate the quantity of gas required. The bottles, then, are brought up from the lower to the higher *cave*, and frequently to the *cellier* on the ground-floor, or even raised to the *grenier* or highest story of the establishment. In a frosty autumn and in the winter, the relative temperature of the higher

and lower compartments is reversed from what it is in a warm spring and in the summer. In the former seasons it is higher above than below; while in the latter it is lower.

The wine is thus carefully nursed for two, three, four years, and even more, and during the whole time is more or less in perpetual motion. Now it is shifted from *cave* to *cave*, again to *cellier* and *grenier*, and thence back again from the highest compartment of the manufactory to its lowest depths, only to renew its periodical journeying. Thus it passes its restless existence of movement until ready for the final transformation which is necessary to fit it for its destiny.

This offspring of Bacchus is like some feeble child of humanity who from his birth requires the most tender care. He is closely watched by nurse and doctor. The influence of the vicissitudes of the seasons upon his tender constitution, more sensible than the thermometer, is minutely observed, and each blush of heat or ripple of cold is no sooner noticed than the cause is removed. Thus fostered, he may attain his full growth; but is still so weakly and sensible to the changes of temperature, that he is forced to travel from one place to another,—here seeking heat to warm his torpid blood into motion, and there cold to check its fevered agitation. He is thus kept in constant movement season after season, and finds no rest until the present is changed for another existence.

The wine which is used to make the ordinary champagne of commerce is seldom kept more than two years after being bottled. The more choice wines of the great vintages, only appreciated by connoisseurs, are kept for a much longer time. The wine of 1858, now ten years old, which is considered the finest ever made, has but just reached perfection. Its age, which involves a great loss of interest upon the original cost, which was exceedingly high, renders it necessarily very expensive, and it therefore can only be obtained by those willing to pay largely.

Let us suppose that the wine, whose course of change, both natural and artificial, we have followed to its bottling, is of the average quality of that out of which is made most of the champagne sent to our market. Two years have now elapsed, and the manufacturer, knowing that his wine, being of ordinary quality, will not improve by age, and unwilling to incur any further loss by interest, prepares it for consumption. The wine, before it has undergone the various processes of preparation, is called *brut*, or raw. It is highly effervescing, but has a bitter, astringent taste, and is not drinkable.

Let us now follow it in its various stages of preparation, until it becomes what the manufacturer calls *vin préparé*, prepared wine, or what we know as the champagne of commerce.

## CHAPTER XIV.

Sediment of Wine—How Deposited—Dosing—Dry and Sweet Wine—Corking—A Miniature Guillotine—Cording—Branded—Packed and Delivered.

IF the bottles of *brut*, or raw wine, whose migrations from place to place we have chronicled, are closely observed in the course of any of their frequent journeys, we shall find them much disturbed. The fluid they contain has become thick and turbid. The motion to which it has been subjected has stirred up from its depths a muddy sediment, which, clouding the whole wine, has rendered it dull and opaque. The first step in the preparation of champagne, the conversion of the *vin brut* (raw wine) into *vin préparé* (prepared wine), is the fixing of this sediment in such a position in the bottle that it may be readily removed.

For this purpose the bottles of raw (*brut*) wine are carefully placed on their sides in one of the cellars; and left in perfect repose. In a very short time the muddiness of the liquid disappears, and it may be seen floating pure and limpid above a thick sediment which has fallen upon the side of the bottle upon which it lies. The bottles are

now changed from a horizontal to a diagonal position, with their necks inclining downwards. They are, to use the technical phrase, placed *sur pointe*. Racks, made of two boards, united in an acute angle above, in form like a half-opened portfolio, and with their sides pierced with holes, are provided for this purpose. The necks of the bottles, thrust through these holes, incline downwards within the two boards, and the raised bottoms project outward toward the passage ways of the cellar, so that they may be within convenient reach of the workmen.

After the bottles are thus arranged *sur pointe*, a workman daily, for six weeks or so, takes hold of each by the bottom, gives it, with a succession of slight turns with his wrist, a half rotatory motion, and changes slightly its position. There is always a daub of whitewash put on each bottle to indicate the original place of the sediment, so that the workman may gauge the extent of each day's movement.

The sediment is thus finally shaken down into the neck by means of this daily maneuver, aided by the inclination of the bottle placed diagonally in the rack.

Madame Clicquot first devised this simple contrivance. So says, at any rate, her biographer. Having received an extensive order from Russia, which was to be immediately executed, but which, however, had been already greatly delayed, she went down into her cellars in order to stimulate

the activity of her workmen. She found them at work in the old-fashioned way, holding the bottles by the neck, turned downwards, and knocking upon their bottoms to detach the sediment, and then, after finally shaking them up, laying them on their sides until they were ready to renew the operation. This mode of proceeding generally lasted many months, and, besides requiring a variety of drugs and clarifiers, which poisoned the wine, was never very effective.

"It is impossible, my men," said Madame Clicquot, "for this to continue so. You have at most fifty thousand bottles ready, and the order is for double that amount."

"But, Madame, you can't send the wine filled with sediment."

"No. I will have it perfectly clear, and every bottle ordered shall be sent."

"You will never succeed: there is no other way than ours."

"I will find another."

"No; it's impossible."

"You will see," replied Madame Clicquot, half-angry with the obstinacy of her workmen, whom she now ordered to abstain henceforward from their interminable work. She then, with a happy conception, contrived the rack as now used, and had all her bottles placed in it.

The workmen shrugged her shoulders. One exclaimed, "A great improvement, indeed! As if

the wine was going to settle any quicker for that machine!" Another added, "We shall see: the wine will only become the thicker for it; for the sediment will have to fall to the bottom again, and then we shall have a mess."

Madame Clicquot let them talk; and, slipping quietly into the cellar day after day, while all the workmen were at dinner, she moved herself some hundreds of bottles in the rack, and in due time triumphed in the perfect success of her contrivance.

Sometimes the sediment clings so firmly that it is necessary in order to detach it to strike the bottle with considerable violence, and place it in a vertical position, with its cork pointing directly to the ground.

When the sediment has all passed into the neck, and rests upon the cork, the bottle is ready for the next stage of the process of preparation. This is called the *dégorgement*, — the disgorging of the sediment.

The workman whose special function it is to perform this operation—the *dégorgeur*, as he is called —places himself, with his apparatus, at the side of the rack containing the patients ready to be operated upon. He must be so near that he can grasp at once each bottle, without any intermediate change of position, which would be sure to disturb the sediment, and render a postponement of the work necessary.

The disgorging apparatus is quite simple, con-



sisting of a basin, opening into a reservoir below, supported by a wooden frame, and partly covered with a hood. Its appearance is not unlike that of an ordinary wash-stand. The workman wears a leathern apron, and has no other implement than a piece of hooked and sharp-pointed steel called a *crochet*. Placing himself before the basin, he seizes the bottle, holding it diagonally with its neck downward, removes its iron fastening (*agrafe*) with a single touch of his hook, and the cork, driven out by the gas, pops out with great force, followed by the sediment which was clinging to it, and a spirting flow of frothy wine. The issue of the latter is checked somewhat by the finger of the operator, who at the same time gives the bottle several quick half-rotatory turns, that the wine which is allowed to escape may rinse out from the neck every particle of deposit. The whole operation is completed in an instant of time, and with a loss ordinarily of not more than a couple of tablespoonfuls of wine.

The basin, with its hood and reservoir, has served the obvious purposes of catching the flying cork, wine, and sediment, which have issued from the bottles during the process, and protecting surrounding objects from injury and defilement. The corks with their iron bands are kept for future use. The wine mixed with sediment can serve no possible purpose, and is thrown away.

The bottles, as soon as disgorged, are ready for the subsequent stages of preparation. To prevent

the further escape of gas and wine, the *dégorgeur* puts into each bottle a cork which, having been already used and well compressed, is easily applied.

The wine is now hoisted from the *cave* to the *cellier* above. Here it is to be dosed, corked, and fastened down with string and iron-wire. The workmen, whose duty it is to perform these several operations, are seated in a row together, with the necessary tools and mechanical contrivances at hand.

The bottle passes first through the hands of the *doser*. This he takes, and, uncorking it and trusting solely to his eye, allows what he deems a sufficient quantity of wine to escape, and then fills, to within a short distance of the mouth, the emptied space with a fluid which he pours out of a tin measure, very like that carried in olden time by the street lamp-lighters. The liquid, moreover, as it flows smoothly of a glistening amber color from the narrow nozzle, has the appearance of the purest spermaceti oil.

This liquid is what is called by the manufacturer the *liqueur*. It is generally composed of sugar-candy, white wine of the best *cuvées*, and the spirit of Cognac (*esprit de Cognac*\*), and is a constituent

\* The following is the composition of the ordinary *liqueur* used:—

Sucre Candi blanc	. . . .	150 kilo.
Vin . . . . .	. . . . .	125 litres.
Esprit de Cognac	. . . .	10 litres.

of all the wine known in commerce as champagne. The quantity used depends upon the original character of the wine, and upon the degree of sweetness it is proposed to give to it.

The wines of the finest vintages, containing naturally more sugar and alcohol, require less of the *liqueur* to bring them to the same degree of sweetness and strength than those of inferior years, which are constitutionally weak and acrid.

The proportion of *liqueur* varies also according to the supposed taste of the consumer for whom the wine is destined. The French and the continental drinkers demand a light and sweet wine, the Russian a sweet and strong one, and the English a very dry but withal an exceedingly vigorous champagne. The Americans are supposed to have a taste between the French and English, and to prefer a wine less sweet and light than that of the former, but not so strong and dry as that of the latter.

It is for the interest of the wine manufacturer that a taste for a very sweet wine should predominate in the world. A dry champagne, to be palatable, must be made of the finest raw wine. A sweet champagne can be made of almost any material. The excessive quantity of sugar in the latter masks completely its original character. In the former every natural feature is distinctly expressed, and its virtues or vices, if it have them, are at once discerned. As fine wines are the excep-

tion, there being hardly one positively good to six ordinary or bad vintages, it is clear that the wine manufacturers could not supply all the immense number of their customers with the product of the choice years alone. If, however, every champagne drinker was sufficiently of a connoisseur to appreciate a dry champagne, none but the choicest juice of the grape could be used in its manufacture. The very best wines only are sent to England, for there it is impossible to sell the bad disguised with sugar, for the taste rejects excessive sweetness.

As long as the consumption of champagne remains so large, and the vicissitudes of the season continue, most of the wine produced and drunk will not be the best. It is well, perhaps, that the popular taste is so little discriminating that it delights in froth and sweetness. If the common palate was more judicious, it would probably be seldom gratified with champagne, for nothing but the dry and best would then be in demand, and it would become too costly and rare for general use.

The *liqueur*, though generally containing nothing but white sugar-candy, wine, and spirit of Cognac, is not always so simply composed. When the English consumer had a fancy for a hue of his national color of red, the wine manufacturer gratified it by mixing a certain quantity of port wine with all the champagne destined for England. The caprice, however, has had its day, and John Bull, even with all his roseate predilections, has finally

given in his adherence to the natural yellow. Madeira wine, Kirsch, tinctures of various kind, strawberry syrups, and vari-coloured brandies, have also been added at times.

A bottle of ordinary champagne contains from thirty to forty per cent. of *liqueur*. The dry fine wines seldom contain more than from ten to fifteen per cent.

As soon as the *liqueur* has been poured in, the bottle is passed to the corker (*boucheur*). He is seated before a machine which looks very much like a miniature guillotine, from which tragic instrument indeed the idea was derived. To attach so painful an association to all the joyous expectations awakened by the sight of a champagne bottle, may seem a treason to joviality; but history demanded the truth, and that truth seemed less bitter when sweetened by the reflection that each execution of the little guillotine is destined to be reversed with a burst of joy. The guillotine is for putting in the cork; it is the cheerful work of every jovial fellow to get it out.

The duty of the machine is twofold,—the compressing of the cork, and the driving it into the neck of the bottle. The corker (*boucheur*) places the bottle at the lower part of the instrument, on a projection which fits exactly within the deeply hollowed bottom found in all champagne bottles, and doubtless made expressly for the purpose. The cork—already branded on the lower end, generally

with the image of a comet,\* and on the side with the name of the manufacturer, by an iron die heated over an alcohol lamp,—is at least one third too large.

The workman takes it thus and gives it to a pair of claws with which the machine is provided, and which open just above the mouth of the bottle. These grasp, compress, and hold it, and then the corker lets go a string which suspends on a pulley an iron mass weighing some twenty pounds. This falls directly upon the cork, and drives it home. In the old machines there is no weight and pulley, and the force is applied with a heavy mallet driven down by the hand.

The bottles thus corked are passed to the man whose business it is to apply the string. This he does with great rapidity and force. The cord is very strong, and, as the man applies it with all his strength, it brings down the edges of the cork, which are originally sharp like those of any other, until they are entirely effaced, and the top becomes round as we see it in the champagne bottle of our tables. The workman now, after giving the bottle two or three rapid turns, passes it to the man or boy at his side, who attaches the wire. He also gives the bottle two or three quick shakes before he places it down. Every one about the establishment who has occasion to touch the bottles

\* This in honor of the "comet year," which produced so fine a vintage.

frequently repeats these shakes, the purpose of which is to mix the *liqueur* and wine well together.

The prudent manufacturer retains in his establishment for about a fortnight the wine thus prepared and corked, in order that by careful inspection he may ascertain if the various processes of preparation have perfectly succeeded. If the corks prove sound and well applied, the liquor remains clear and transparent, and the effervescence appears brisk, the bottles are removed into another compartment of the *cellier* called the packing-room. Here the corks and necks are covered with tin or gold foil or wax, and the sides of the bottles adorned with the *etiquette* or label of the house. They are now carefully packed in small wooden cases, or osier baskets, containing a dozen each, if intended for the American or English market, or in larger ones, holding thirty or even more bottles, if to be sent to a French or continental customer. Each package being marked with the especial symbol of the manufacturer, and the address of the distant agent or customer, is now ready for shipment.

## CHAPTER XV.

How to choose Champagne—Excessive Popularity no Recommendation—Pop and Froth—Strength of Bottles—Tests of Quality of Wine—False and True—A Universal Distillery—When to drink Champagne—Corked—Ice or no Ice—How to drink Champagne—Innocence of Good Champagne—Social Qualities—An Aristocratic Wine-mixer.

IT might seem superfluous, after the minute description I have given of the growth, manufacture, and trade of champagne, to say more, but there is an art of knowing what kind to drink, and how to drink it, which is well worth the study of all those who seek to refine even their animal desires. These guided by knowledge and chastened by a refined taste, lose all their grossness, and thus their gratification is not disfigured by the coarseness of debauch or the deformity of disease. The connoisseur of wine, with his discriminating taste, is the companionable gentleman who lives long to cheer the social table. He is a satisfaction to himself and a pleasure to all around him. He who drinks only to drink, and gulps down every flowing glass with indiscriminate thirst, is the frequenter of the crowded but unsocial bar-room, or the solitary bibber of the hidden bottle. He soon becomes a horror to himself and a terror to others.



The connoisseur, in choosing his champagne, is rather repelled than attracted by the excessive popularity of a brand. Knowing the common predilection for sweetness, pop, and froth, he is sure that the wine in general circulation will have been endowed with those superficial qualities at the expense of more substantial attributes.

The champagne which explodes the loudest and flows out the frothiest, is like a great many other things in this world of sound and show, by no means the best. It is, in fact, a proof of its inferiority. Good wine absorbs largely the carbonic acid gas generated in the course of its manufacture. In bad wine the gas, instead of being absorbed, accumulates in the vacant space above the liquid, and thus, when the bottle is opened, the cork explodes with great violence, followed by a cataract of froth. When this escapes the wine remains comparatively flat. In good wine, on the other hand, the cork may require a great effort to draw, and when drawn there may be little or no froth, but the liquid will be seen to sparkle with those minute gems of brightness tossed up and down by the juggling spirit of the ethereal element. The explosive force and effervescence of poor champagne, great as they may be, soon vanish like those of soda-water, but the sparkle of good wine will continue, even if uncorked, for twenty-four hours. At the first opening hardly one third of the whole gas escapes.

The demand on the part of the public for a noisy

and frothy champagne is so urgent, that the manufacturers do their utmost to satisfy it. The strength of the bottles is the only check to their efforts. These are seldom able to bear a pressure amounting to more than five or six atmospheres. That of seven and eight will be almost sure to break them. New bottles are much stronger than those once used, for the old ones have been weakened by a distension of the particles of glass, by the previous expansive force to which they have been subjected. In the champagne district the manufacturer uses none other but the new. In this country old bottles are employed for holding the native effervescing wines, and the many imitations of the foreign. Breakage is consequently a frequent occurrence, even after the wine has come into possession of the consumer. I knew a youth in whose hand a bottle of American champagne burst, and so wounded the intricate net-work of vessels, that the blood could only be stopped by the surgeon, who was forced to tie the main artery of the arm for the purpose. I have never heard of a similar accident from a genuine bottle of champagne.

The manufacturers, however, meet sometimes with great losses from the breakage even of the new and strongest bottles. One dolefully records: "In the year 1746 I bottled 6000 bottles; 120 bottles were all that remained of the lot. In 1747 the wine did not contain quite so much *liqueur* (sugar and wine) as in the preceding season, but

still one third of the bottles burst, and in 1748 (using probably still less sugar) only one-sixth."

A strong effervescence is always accompanied by excessive sweetness, which comes from the large addition of sugar to produce the popular pop and froth, both of which are indications certainly of too much *liqueur*, and generally of an inferior champagne. The acidity and meagreness of this can be so completely disguised by the "dosing," that no manufacturer cares to waste his best wine, whose fineness of *bouquet* and flavor could not possibly be recognized, smothered as they would be by the lusciousness of the syrup or *liqueur*.

In judging of champagne the connoisseur relies mainly upon his senses of taste and smell. His sight, too, is brought into requisition, and if he sees that it flows out smoothly, but yet sparkles briskly in the glass, is transparent, glistening, and of a pale amber color, he at once is disposed to believe that he has a good and old wine before him. If it comes forth fizzing and foaming, and is of a dullish white hue, he is almost ready to condemn it, on first appearance, as a meagre youngling, which, however skillfully treated, and whatever may be its pretensions, will never be fit to be introduced into the best company.

The wine to be tasted should have the temperature of from 50° to 54° of Fahrenheit. A great degree of cold will mask the vices of the bad as well as the virtues of the good. The season of the

year and the state of the atmosphere, too, are not without their effect. In March and April all wines are said to be in motion or undergoing a certain degree of decomposition, and the taste of the best will be consequently injuriously affected. Thunderstorms and strong gales, either by their electrical influences or the concussions of air they produce, likewise disturb the nicely balanced qualities of a fine champagne and spoil its flavor.

Before tasting the wine, the connoisseur often pours a drop or two in the palm of his hand, and, rubbing it, tests it by the sense of smell. If good, it will have an aromatic odor; if bad, a mixed sugary and spirituous smell.

The skillful *degustateur*, as the French manufacturer calls him (the taster), only sips the wine submitted to his judgment, and, turning it slowly, brings it again and again backward and forward in his mouth. He has learned by practice what the physiologist has long taught in theory, that the nerves of taste are placed at the point, and the still more delicate ones of flavor at the root of the tongue. The former can only distinguish, for example, the obvious difference between the sweet and sour; while the latter, particularly if practiced, can discriminate the nicer degrees of each. The *bouquet* of wine, which appeals at the same time to the taste and smell, is only to be detected by the palate, or rear part of the tongue. Here, say the anatomists, are closely interwoven the nerves which serve both these senses.

Good champagne should never be heavier than water; but, to settle this question, recourse must be had to the science of the chemist. An instrument, however, has been contrived for this purpose which is sometimes used by the manufacturer, and is called an *areometer*. This has a graduated scale, and the point to which it sinks in pure water is marked with a zero. When placed in any other fluid, if it sinks to the same depth it is an indication that it is of the same weight as water; if not so deep, that it is lighter; and if deeper, that it is heavier.

Although there is a great deal of so-called champagne, the grape of which it was made—if made of grape at all—never grew on the hills of Rheims or its neighborhood; there is not, it is presumed, much that is adulterated with absolutely poisonous ingredients. In Germany, Switzerland, even in France and in the United States, there is a large quantity doubtless of liquid manufactured which has the sensible properties—the sweetness and effervescence—of champagne, but none other of its attributes. This may be made of grapes, of spoiled and inferior wines of different kinds, of cider, or the juices of the common fruits of temperate countries. Outwardly it displays every appearance of genuine champagne, whose bottles, labels, and various familiar adornments it assumes. There are always in the United States purchasers ready to buy the old baskets and cases—which have once

contained genuine wine, and are marked with the symbols of well-known manufacturers — of the restaurateurs and grocers, to whom they willingly pay a price much beyond their original cost. The obvious motive of the purchase is that they may be used to pack spurious wine, and thus pass it off as genuine. The only security for the consumer who desires to purchase a genuine brand, is to buy of the authorized agent or of him whose integrity is undoubted.

All wine that comes even from Champagne is by no means genuine. There are manufacturers there who fabricate wines from grapes never grown in the district which alone produces the real fruit. These will sell their concoctions at three or four dollars a dozen, give them as jaunty a look in bottle as the choicest Clicquot or Consular Seal, and call them by any name the purchaser may fancy within the limit of the law. These same artificers, of exhaustless ingenuity, will make to order not only champagne, but wine and spirits of any kind and country. When consular agent at Rheims, I legalized many an invoice of "Madeira," "Sherry," "Port," "fine old Cognac," and the "best Holland Gin," and of all sorts of *liqueurs*, "Chartreuse," "Curacao," and "Kirsch," exported to the United States from Epernay, by an expert manufacturer of that place. I had reason to believe that within his extensive premises he had brought together the vinous powers of production of the whole world,

and could, without travelling beyond his own walls, summon at his call the rich cordial of the Alps, the fiery spirit of the Low Countries, the wine of the Cape, the *liqueur* of the Antilles, or the products of any other quarter of the globe. In fact it is no secret in Champagne that this ingenious and wealthy manufacturer, whose success has been commensurate with his wondrous enterprise, has virtually abolished all the geographical divisions of the earth, and, recognizing their diversity only in name and idea, produces within his own inclosure any wine, spirit, or *liqueur* a customer may demand. I know by name his agent in the United States, and I would no more think of drinking of his vari-colored bottles than I would of those of an apothecary shop.

Champagne, as it is known to the consumer, the *vin préparé* (prepared wine) of the manufacturers, does not improve by age. The wine, the *vin brut* (raw), of which it is made, provided it be good, does, however, benefit by increase of years. As soon as champagne leaves the manufacturer, and has reposed about a fortnight from the agitation of its voyage, it is in the best condition for drinking.

A quick passage across the stormy Atlantic by steamer, such as most of the genuine champagne consumed in the United States has to undergo, improves it, by thoroughly mixing the *liqueur* with the wine.

As soon as the consumer has purchased his stock,

he should remove the bottles from their baskets or cases and lay them in a cellar of about 45° on their sides, with an inclination of the necks downwards, so that the wine may remain in contact with the corks. These thus kept constantly bathed with the vinous fluid are prevented from drying and shrinking and from being covered with mould, which will spoil the flavour of the best champagne. If the cork shrinks from dryness and heat, the gas will escape, and the wine, losing its sparkle, become flat.

There is often heard a complaint of the wine being "corked." The French call this *gout de bouchon*, taste of the cork. With all the care of the most cautious manufacturers, this will occasionally occur from some radical defect of the cork, which may escape the closest scrutiny.

The first-class manufacturers are very nice about the corks they use. The material is imported from Spain, but is cut at Rheims, where a whole colony of Spanish cork-cutters has settled for the purpose. Each champagne cork of the finest kind costs the manufacturer about three cents. Before it is applied it has the ordinary form, but is much larger than the common wine-cork, being of a diameter before compressed at least one-third too great. Its flat top is pulled into the rounded head it has in the champagne bottle by the drawing down and fastening of the cord.

The taste of the cork exists much less often than



it is complained of. The waiter of the hotel or restaurant, who is quick at the detection of a pretended connoisseur, is always suspicious of such a complaint. He, however, demurely takes away the bottle, with probably a compliment to the nice discrimination of his customer, and quickly disappears. If the wine admits of it, he has no sooner reached the pantry than he recorks the bottle and brings it back, without having given himself the trouble even of a look into the cellar. Presenting the same bottle with a new cork, he says, with the utmost suavity, "Try that, sir; I am sure you'll find it to your taste." The would-be-connoisseur pours out the wine, sips it, smacks his lips with the satisfaction of a finished wine-bibber, and smiling gratefully to the waiter, declares pompously, "It's all right now." With champagne this cannot be done: and the waiter accordingly transfers the bottle complained of to some other customer who has ordered his wine iced, and to whom necessarily it is to be presented uncorked, while he gets another bottle for the querulous and pretentious judge.

Champagne should always be drank cold; but when it is good and dry it is a palatable beverage even though its temperature has not been much reduced. The ordinary wine of commerce is generally so sweet that it is hardly drinkable until almost frozen. Such champagne may be congealed or even mixed with pieces of ice, for excessive cold disguises its nauseous sweetness; and if diluted it

loses advantageously the alcoholic strength with which it is so frequently endowed. Fine, dry wine, however, should seldom be kept more than ten minutes in the freezer, and never be mixed with ice or poured into a decanter of frozen water. Its natural lightness requires no dilution; and excessive cold, whether produced by freezing or by dropping pieces of ice into it, deprives it of its aroma and vinous taste.

The effervescence of champagne depends much upon the form and condition of the glass out of which it is drank. It sparkles much more vigorously when poured into a glass pointed than in one that is round or flat at the bottom. The presence of a little dust left by a careless waiter will increase greatly the development of the gas; and the glass that, after being rinsed with water, is wiped with a towel however fine, will cause the champagne poured into it to sparkle; while the same wine will be comparatively still in a glass which has been merely rinsed and untouched afterwards. The cause of this is owing to the fact that in the former case there is always some of the lint of the cloth left clinging to the vessel, while in the latter there is none. A crack or a scratch will also greatly augment the sparkle. The old-fashioned tapering glass, called a *flute*, is the one generally preferred in Champagne. There are some of these *flutes* which will hold a half-bottle of wine. On great occasions, when the Rheims folk indulge in high jinks, it is

the custom to fill these enormous glasses with champagne and call upon each guest to drink one off at a draught, under pain, if he fails, of paying for a full bottle of wine to be drunk by the company.

*On ne devient pas ivrogne avec le champagne.* "One does not become a drunkard from drinking champagne," is accepted as a proverb in the country where it is produced. This of course applies only to good wine. The ugly but clever Princess Charlotte Elizabeth of Bavaria, the Duchess of Orleans, however, wrote in a letter, Aug. 13, 1716, "When my son [subsequently the Regent] gets drunk, it is not in drinking strong drink or spirituous liquors, but a little champagne." Her French translator adds in a note, "People do not any longer get drunk with champagne."

Champagne wine is eminently a social beverage. It breaks the monotony and the wearisomeness of a lengthy dinner, "for *ennui* will pursue and catch us even at table," says a French disciple of Brillat Savarin, who adds: "Champagne wine, with its amber hue, its *éclat*, its sparkle, and its perfume, arouses the senses and produces a cheerfulness which flashes through the company like a spark of electricity. At the magic word, Champagne! the guests, dull and torpid with good feeling, awake at once. This lively, ethereal, and charming beverage sets in motion the spirits of all; the phlegmatic, the grave, and the philosophic are surprised to find themselves amiable; in the wink of an eye (or the pop of a

cork) the whole banquet has changed its physiognomy."

Brillat Savarin aphoristically says, "Tell me what you drink and I will tell you what you are." His French disciple, answering for the drinkers of champagne, says: "The table on which champagne figures—let it be said, however, in passing, that I speak of good champagne, for all so-called is by no means worthy of the name—is always a splendid one, and indicate not only a certain ease of fortune, but a grace in the habits of life."

I was told by a pompous wine-mixer of Rheims that he only served the aristocracy. I found, however, that he was no less eager to dispose of his bottles for the dollars of the American citizen than for the *kopecks* of the Russian prince. Boston, by its natural affinity, perhaps, with European rank, is about the sole consumer in the United States of the exalted beverage of this gentleman's gentleman of Rheims, who so willingly assumes the livery of the aristocracy, though not above, it would seem, pocketing the dollars thrown to him from this plebeian but profuse Republic.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Merinos and other Woollen Productions— Their Superiority —  
The English Factory— Annual Production of Woollen Goods  
— Wonderful Effect of Free Trade— Duty of Consul at Rheims  
— No Necessity for One — *Biscuits de Rheims* — Gingerbread  
— Gingerbread-maker to the Emperor.

**R**HEIMS has been long famous for its merinos, and of late years it has taken precedence in the manufacture of flannels and other woollen goods. In the general market of Europe, even inclusive of that of England, its fabrics bear the palm of superiority. The flannel of Wales, noted for its excellence from time immemorial, cannot now compete in quality and price with that of Rheims.

The remarkable fineness and softness of the merinos may have been at one time due to the wool produced in the neighboring country of Rheims, but when, as at present, the chief supply comes from Australia, and is sold in the London market common to all the world, this cannot be the cause of the superiority which is still maintained. There seems no natural reason, dependent upon soil, climate, or peculiarity of breed, to account for the excellence of the woollen manufactures of Rheims. It is to be attributed solely to superior skill and

care in workmanship. For their machinery the manufacturers are still largely indebted to England, and they have no processes of fabrication that are not familiar to the whole world.

The wool is both combed and woven into tissues at Rheims. The principal establishment for the former operation belongs to an Englishman, a Mr. Holden, of Bradford, in Yorkshire, which town he represents in Parliament. His nephew superintends the factory at Rheims, where he has an extensive range of buildings and a whole colony of English workmen, who, with their Methodist Chapel supported by Mr. Holden, and their Anglican habits of which they are so tenacious, form a group of people as distinct from the surrounding Frenchmen as if the channel still flowed between them. The machinery of this establishment, the invention, I believe, of the elder Holden of Bradford, is the most ingenious I ever beheld. It seemed endowed not only with the flexible hands but the intelligence of humanity. One machine takes up the dirty wool, and when sufficiently cleansed passes it to another, which, after combing it, transfers in its turn to a third, which twists it into yarn and then gives it to a fourth, which completes the process by rolling it into a ball. All this is done without the interference apparently of a single human being, although here and there is a girl or boy to provide against accident.

Holden's superior machinery gives him almost

the monopoly of wool-combing, for he can do it better and cheaper than any of his competitors. He has sold his patent again and again, but his French rival had no sooner started his establishment, than Holden had invented some improvement to his machinery by which he still secured his pre-eminence.

The manufacture of tissues is almost entirely in the hands of the French, and in it they show their characteristic taste, care, and economy.

The value of the annual production of the two chief manufactures of Rheims, wine and woollen, is about one hundred and twenty millions of francs (twenty-four millions of dollars). Of this amount the wine gives forty millions of francs (eight millions of dollars), and the woollen manufacture, including both the combing and weaving into tissues, eighty millions of francs (sixteen millions of dollars). This implies an extent of commercial transaction which, if account is taken of all intermediary acts of buying and selling on the spot, reaches the large sum of five hundred millions of francs, or a hundred millions of dollars annually.

The commercial treaty between France and England, which was negotiated by Cobden, has been of great benefit to the woollen trade. In 1859 the quantity of raw wool bought in France and in foreign countries by the manufacturers and commission merchants of Rheims, amounted in value to sixty-five millions of francs (thirteen millions

of dollars); in 1865 it had reached nearly eighty millions of francs (sixteen millions of dollars). The total production of woollen tissues manufactured in 1859 was valued at sixty millions of francs (twelve millions of dollars); and in 1865 at eighty millions of francs (sixteen millions of dollars). This substantial result has converted all those engaged in the woollen trade in Rheims, from furious opponents into ardent advocates of free trade. Those whom the sound principles of Say and pointed illustrations of Bastiat—though presented for years with all the clearness of statement, directness of application and accuracy of reasoning that logic, language, and exact information could command—failed to impress, have been suddenly and thoroughly convinced by the practical benefits of the Cobden treaty.

Surrounded as I was by these fresh converts to free trade, who, being new proselytes, were all the more warm in their advocacy, I was constantly beset while at Rheims with demands for the reasons why a country so enlightened as my own should persevere in its so-called protective but in reality destructive policy. I freely confessed, in accordance with the convictions I had always held, that being a free-trader myself, I had no reasons to offer, but would leave it to my superiors in authority to present them. I became, however, soon heartily ashamed of my consular vocation, which seemed to serve no other purpose than to place obstructions



in the way of commerce, and put fees in my pockets, or rather into those of the United States Consul at Paris, who took the lion's share of them.

My chief duty was to receive thirteen francs and fifty centimes (two dollars and a half) for signing my name, and stamping a portentous seal of office upon each invoice of wine exported from Rheims to the United States. This function, in the especial case of champagne,—the only article of direct export, —being entirely unnecessary, was of no service to the government, and a very serious obstruction and heavy expense to trade. The duty on champagne is nominally *ad valorem*, but in reality specific, for the market-price of the wine at Rheims never rises high enough to bring the duty beyond the minimum of six dollars a dozen, specified in our tariff. Let the wine-merchants of Rheims invoice their merchandize at the highest or lowest price, they cannot by any possibility pay more or less than six dollars. The government should at once do away with the semblance of an *ad valorem* duty on champagne, and frankly establish, what in reality now exists, a specific one. There would then be no excuse, as there is now no necessity, for sending to Rheims a consular extortioner to wring, in the name of the United States, but for the benefit of its superfluous official, the paltry sum of a few hundred francs annually from a friendly commercial people.

The woollen products of Rheims are largely con-

sumed in the United States, but they are not directly exported there from their place of manufacture. The business is conducted entirely through the agency of London and Paris, so the invoices are never legalized at the Consulate at Rheims. Consequently there need be none for the especial purpose of receiving the woollen tribute.

No account of the manufactures and trade of Rheims would be complete, without an illusion at least to its famous biscuits and gingerbread. These articles may not count for much, in the annual reports of chambers of commerce and statements of dignified officials, but they have done more to make the name of Rheims familiar, in France at least, than all its wine and merinos. *Les biscuits de Rheims* are found upon every French table. It is no exaggeration to say that there is not a single Frenchman, woman, or child in the whole empire, who finishes his dinner without eating one of these biscuits, which bear the name of, if they do not come from, Rheims. They are little square cakes, of great lightness, composed of flour, sugar, and eggs, and baked so dry that they never seem to lose their freshness. When properly packed in tin they will bear exportation to the most distant countries, and I am surprised that they are not more generally consumed in the United States. Nothing can be more wholesome and palatable, for though dry, a little soaking in tea, coffee, or wine, which is the way that they are generally eaten, gives them

the freshness of just-baked sponge cake. Every street in Rheims has its bakery of *biscuits*, and no visitor comes to the place without taking away with him a box of them.

The gingerbread I have never tasted, but according to common report, it is no less delectable than the biscuits; and there is a *Pain-d'épicier à l'Empereur*—a gingerbread-maker to the Emperor—at Rheims, it is reasonable to suppose that his Imperial Majesty Louis Napoleon and her Imperial Majesty Eugénie, occasionally indulge in it, or keep a supply for his Royal Highness the Prince Imperial. No French fair is deemed complete without it, and any child under its teens who did not get its fairing of Rheims gingerbread, would deem itself unfairly treated.

## CHAPTER XVII.

Dullness of Rheims — How Accounted For — Antiquities —  
Phædrus — Palace — Jovinus — *Les Arcades* — An Old House  
— Where the Family of Joan of Arc put up — Origin of Rheims  
— Roman Arch — *Hotel de Ville* — Library — Rare Books —  
Pictures — A Brazen Lie.

EVERY stranger almost who comes to Rheims finds fault with it for its dullness, and the inhabitants themselves seldom refuse their assent to the unflattering complaint. There is certainly an air of solemn gravity about the place, which is not favorable to the stir of the more lively emotions. The Cathedral throwing its great shadow far and wide, and dominating the whole town and neighborhood, seems to envelop them in a perpetual gloom.

The arrangement of most of the houses adds to the sombreness of effect. Many of these having originally been monasteries, convents, or other places of religious use, are heavy structures inclosed within thick and high walls. The modern houses, even in accordance with the general French practice, are closely hidden; so that in passing through some of the streets of Rheims nothing is

to be seen on either side but barriers of dark masonry rising many feet above one's head.

The large wine establishments and woollen factories, some of which were also originally monasteries and convents, enveloped in coal smoke, and with their surfaces stained by time and filthy usage, are moreover not of an enlivening aspect.

The population is large for a provincial town, there being sixty thousand inhabitants, and the trade extensive, yet the streets are rarely thronged with people, and seldom noisy with the stir of business. I was much puzzled to know how the many millions of bottles of champagne, and the multitude of cases of merinos and other woollen goods, which I knew must find their exit from the town, could be borne away so quiet and unnoticed. The fact that the manufactories and warehouses are scattered over an extended surface, and mostly situated in the suburbs, may partly account for the quietude, but still it seems strange that they should not impart some of their briskness of activity to the streets.

The isolated life of the more prosperous inhabitants tends also to deprive the town of that animation which comes from the presence of gayly dressed persons and the movement of showy equipages. The wealthy people and their families rarely show themselves in the street, and during most of the year are entirely absent from Rheims.

To enjoy and appreciate Rheims, one must visit

it with an object, and come prepared, if not with a knowledge of ancient art, with some taste for it.

There are not only the Cathedral and the great Church of Saint Remi, but other monuments, which are worthy of the study of the artist and the notice of the curious. A large number of English visitors, and of the most intelligent kind, inspired by the prevailing taste, come annually to Rheims for no other purpose than to see the churches and the other remarkable specimens of mediæval art. During the season of travel not a day passes without bringing the Anglican pilgrim, generally of ritualistic tendency, to bow in adoration before these genuine offsprings of old Mother Church.

By the side of the Church of Saint Remi formerly stood the ancient monastery, or rather archimonastery of that name, for it was elevated by the Pope to this high distinction, in consequence of its original possession of the remains of the great saint. The ancient building was burnt, and the present one, which is used for a hospital, is of modern date. With the monastery was consumed the great library, among whose treasures was the original copy of the "*Fables of Æsop*," translated into Iambic verse by Phædrus. The work was discovered, copied, and given to the public by the learned monks of Saint Remi, and to their enlightened care and erudition the world is not only indebted for one of the choicest remains of classical literature, but possibly for the charming fables of

Lafontaine, who evidently admired his Greek prototype, as he has rivaled him in sententiousness of expression, purity of style, and simplicity of conception.

The archiepiscopal palace by the side of the great Cathedral, and within the same inclosure, although its exterior has been deformed by repeated changes and the addition of a long range of ill-looking buildings, has within a little chapel of graceful architecture and undoubted antiquity. It now possesses the monument of Jovinus, at one time in the Cathedral, but originally in the Church of Saint Nicaise. When Santerre, the Revolutionist of brutal memory, demolished the fair edifice, he had the unusual grace to save this ancient work of art, which failed, it is said, to provoke his destructive rage, because it was so exclusively heathen and free from any odious indication of Christianity. It is a fine specimen, in white marble, of Roman bas-relief representing a hunt. Jovinus, though a Roman, was a convert to Christianity, and unlike his master, Julian the Apostate, was constant to the new faith. His memory is therefore greatly revered by the ecclesiastical town.

It is impossible to walk in any part of the old town of Rheims without remarking some specimen of ancient architecture. There are whole streets of houses with peaked gables facing the road, and upper stories, with arches below for the passage of the people, projecting over the sidewalks. These

form the most cheerful portion of the town, and as they contain the gayest shops and *cafés*, are well frequented. *Les Arcades*, as they are termed, are seldom without some lounging soldiers, and saucy girls displaying their cheap finery; and during the idle hours of noon and evening there is quite a crowd, for Rheims, of miscellaneous people, clerks from counting-houses, *commis voyageurs*, *employés* of the public departments, officers of the garrison, and a few stray strangers.

*La Maison des Chanteurs*, the house of the singers, is, though greatly changed from its original aspect, much admired by archæologists as a remarkable specimen of the architecture of the beginning of the fourteenth century. What remains of its graceful *façade*, especially the portion adorned with five figures of musicians with their various instruments, is considered a valuable relic of early art.

Among the many Gothic houses inclosing the market-place, there is one of excessively antique aspect, supposed to have been erected in the time of Charles VI. of France. Its ranges of stories project one above the other, each being supported by carved figures, while the whole surface, from its wide base to its peaked gable, is covered thick with sculptured flowers and ornaments.

Round the corner from my dwelling-place, the *Lion d'Or*, there is another hotel, the *Maison Rouge*, upon whose front are inscribed these words: "*L'an 1429, au sacre de Charles VII., dans cette*



*hôtellerie, nommée alors l'Ane Rayé, le père et la mère de Jeanne d'Arc ont été logés, et défrayés par le conseil de ville ;*" "In the year 1429, at the consecration of Charles VII., in this hostelry, named then the Striped Ass, the father and mother of Joan of Arc were lodged, and their expenses paid by the city council."

Rheims is of so ancient a date that its origin has been forgotten. A pious canon, however, has traced it back to Noah, and a learned monk to the fabulous Remus. It was unquestionably a flourishing capital when Gaul was first invaded by the Romans. Cæsar, in his "Commentaries," speaks of it as *Durocortorum Remorum*. In the course of time it was briefly called, as was the usage in regard to the capitals, by the name of the people, Remi, and hence the modern name Rheims. When once conquered by the Roman legions, it remained faithful to the eagles of Cæsar, and became one of his most powerful allies.

Traces are still left of the Roman domination; in a beautiful triumphal arch and other remains of ancient art. The arch was raised, according to most authorities, in honor of Julius Cæsar. Some, however, contend that it was erected in the year 277, by the inhabitants of Rheims, in gratitude to the Emperor Probus for his permission to replant the vine after the defeat of the German invaders; and others insist that it was built as a monument of the victories of Julian.

In grandeur of proportion and richness of sculpture, the arch at Rheims is hardly surpassed by any surviving work of Roman art. It is composed of three large arched openings, supported by Corinthian columns. The vaulted roofs and sides are richly adorned with sculptured ornaments, medallions, and bas-reliefs. The Seasons, the traditional Romulus and Remus, and their nursing wolf, and the mythological love of Jupiter and Leda, are among the chief subjects. One of the arches has been lately restored, and with apparent fidelity to the original design, which is much defaced by time.

A fine mosaic of Roman origin was discovered while digging the foundation of the new railway station, as also an altar, with sculptures representing an ancient sacrifice. The discovery of many other specimens of classic art would undoubtedly reward the perseverance of the antiquary; but little can be expected in this behalf from the modern Rheims, which is so devoted to present interests as to care but little for the past or future.

The *Hôtel de Ville*, the city hall of Rheims, built in the early part of the seventeenth century, is a fair specimen of the florid Italian architecture in vogue at that period. Its front is richly decorated with sculptures of the emblems of war and victory, and is supported by sixty-eight columns of the three orders of Greek architecture,—the Doric,

Ionic, and Corinthian. Above the central pavilion there is a bas-relief representing Louis XIII. on horseback. In his honor is this flattering inscription in Latin :—"To Louis, the just, the pious, the victorious, the clement, the beloved of the French, the terror of his enemies, the delight of the world, the senate and people of Rheims have raised this imperishable trophy."\* The original bas-relief, which was in wood, was destroyed by the Revolutionists of 1790, in their rage against royalty and its effigy of whatever kind. It was replaced in 1818 by the present work in stone.

In one wing of the *Hôtel de Ville* there is a public library, containing 30,000 volumes and 1000 rare manuscripts. When the abbeys and religious communities of the town were abolished in 1791, those books of their precious collections which escaped the destructive hands of the revolutionary iconoclasts were gathered together and taken charge of by the city authorities. In the library there are some choice specimens of early printing and illumination. Among the books there is a Homer of 1488, a Dionysius of Halicarnassus of 1548, an "*Anneus Florus*" of 1470, and other rarities. Among the manuscripts there is a copy of the Evangelists in the Slavonic language, the Derivations and Etymologies written by Saint Isidor; the

\* Ludovico Justo, Pio, Victori, Clementi, Qui Galeorum Amor, Hostium Terror, Orbis Deliciæ, Æternum Trophæum, S. P. Q. R. PP.

"*Pontifical d'Hincmar*;" "*Les Heures*" of Queen Emma, the wife of *Louis d'Outremer*; and the "*Graduel de l'Abbaye de Saint Nicaise*," said to be of incalculable value.

The librarian—a dusty little man, who seemed to me a prodigy of learning, as he may well be, for he has the reading of the thirty thousand books and one thousand manuscripts all to himself—spoke with the utmost contempt of his fellow citizens of Rheims. "They never put a foot in the place," he said, "and I am hardly asked for a book once in a twelvemonth. *Ah! ces bêtes-là ne pensent qu'au vin mousseux et merinos*;" "Ah, those stupid fellows think only of champagne and merino."

By the side of the library there is a small gallery of paintings, among which there is a genuine landscape of Berghem; a characteristic picture, *The Father's Curse*, by Greuze; and the *Blind Restored to Sight*, by Poussin. There is also a showy canvas, of immense size, upon which a modern French artist has emblazoned his conception of the Baptism of Clovis. It is covered with nude figures, male and female, the originals of which it is easy to see were the abandoned debauchees of the Parisian green-rooms and masked balls. The painting was ordered by the clergy for one of the churches, but being found too indecent for so sacred a place, was transferred to the museum of the *Hôtel de Ville*, where it does not fail to find a host of unscrupulous admirers.

In the *Place Royale*—a broad square flanked by handsome structures, among which is conspicuous a great shop upon whose front is inscribed in tall letters of gold: *Pain-d'épicer à l'Empereur*, “Gingerbread-maker to the Emperor”—there is a bronze monument to Louis XV. It is the work of the sculptor Pigalle, and was erected at the expense of the city in 1765. The main figure was intended to represent Louis XV.; but in the heroic lineaments of the face worthy of a Brutus, I saw no indication of resemblance to the royal debauchee. Two chaste feminine statues, representing Agriculture and Commerce, recline on either side of the king, but I never heard before of his ever having been seen in such respectable female company. In the inscription a servile municipality has termed the worthless sovereign wise, virtuous, and magnanimous.

Though Art should be sacred to all, I am disposed to pardon the Republicans of France for the rude hands they laid upon this brazen lie, and to regret that while they were at their work of destruction they had not been more thorough and crushed it for ever to the earth. The statue of the king was indeed so mauled that nothing was left of it but an indistinct mass of metal, which required all the art of another sculptor, and the inexhaustible servility of the city, to restore to shape, and thus reiterate the untruth and record anew their own shame.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

A Cheerful Resort—Cemetery at Rheims—Death and Champagne—The Balls of the *Embarcadère*—Police Morality—The Theatre—Respectability—An Official on Exhibition—Carnival at Rheims—Masked Balls—Fairs and Holidays—Easter Fair—Public Promenades—Their Frequenters—An Inland Town—Canal—Walks and Illusions—Forest of Ardennes—Shakespeare and Sportsmen.

A FRENCH traveller says that the gayest place in New York to which his friends could take him was a cemetery. I found the cemetery at Rheims by no means the least cheerful resort of that dull town. The grounds are prettily disposed with winding walks and shrubbery, and each burial spot, from the stately tomb of the rich to the humblest grave of the poor, has its bed of bright flowers.

The cold reserve of the Puritan heart may feel no sympathy with the free exhibition to public gaze by the French in their cemeteries of their most tender sentiments. The words of endearment so boldly and so profusely recorded; the tears sculptured in stone, and kept freshly-gilded; the memorials of the dead; the trinkets of vanity; the decorations of beauty and the playthings of childhood exposed to the view of every visitor, seem to us a profanity

of grief. We keep such memorials to weep over in secret. The American mother, hiding within her bosom, from which her child has been torn by cruel death, its lock of hair, and guarding in her inmost drawer each memorial of her lost one,—the stocking that covered the little dimpled and once rosy foot, and the whistle and bells that used to brighten the tender eyes now closed for ever,—watches every opportunity to catch a secret glance at them, and to indulge alone in her luxury of woe.

The French, who are among the most devoted of lovers and tenderest of parents, know little of that wearing sorrow for the untimely loss of a beloved one, that blights so often and even destroys with us the life of the bereaved. In France they do not believe in the possibility of a broken heart.

The communicativeness of French sentiment in grief, at any rate, is wiser, and, it may be said, more in consonance with the design of our creation,—for we were certainly made to live for the living and not die for the dead,—than the studied secrecy of our deepest emotions so universal with us. By sharing their sorrows with the world, the French are led to regard death, in its general sense, as the common destiny of humanity, and thus it is considered more rationally and lamented less grievously. We, on the other hand, viewing the dread affliction more individually, are apt to forget that it is a general law, and, mourning as if we are especially stricken, will not be comforted.

On entering the cemetery at Rheims for the first time, I was struck with surprise, almost shocked even, to behold those cheerful names, Heidsieck, Clicquot, Roederer, and Mumm, staring at me from the tombs of stone. Here was indeed a skeleton for every man's feast. That those jolly and familiar words, associated with the gay festivals of the whole world, — christenings and weddings, feasts and merry-makings, — should now appear to me crowned with death's-heads and bloody-bones, and, pointing a *memento mori*, seemed like a mockery of all good fellowship. I shall never hereafter lift a foaming glass of champagne to my lips without thinking of the burial place at Rheims, and of the *Pallida mors æquo pulsat pede*, &c., of Horace.

It was certainly quite in conformity with the laws of nature that the bones of a Mumm or a Clicquot should be laid in the course of time in the handsome tombs their wealth has provided for them, but I had never regarded these jolly names as associated with any more serious fatality than an empty bottle.

On All Saints' day, *Toussaint*, the festival of the dead, the *fête des morts*, the whole town, and especially the cemetery of Rheims, was a scene of lively, and I may say cheerful, excitement. Along the street leading to the latter were arranged on both sides stalls and tables, gayly festooned with crowns, crosses, and *memento moris*, and attended by female hucksters. These were giggling, and bantering each



other in the intervals of the brisk business they were carrying on with the throng of mourners,—men, women, and children,—all in suits of black, who were pressing forward to the cemetery, to bestow upon the dead their annual tribute of flowers and funereal gewgaws.

Early in the morning the *cure* of the Cathedral, my jovial friend, in full canonicals, leading a long procession of singing boys and the whole church choir of musicians, blowing a full blast with sack-but, harp, and trumpet as they marched through the streets, had gone to bless the cemetery, as is done each year.

This ceremony over, the cemetery filled with a throng of mourners bearing each their tributes to the dead,—a flower, an earthenware cherub, a plaster cast of the infant Samuel, a wreath of *immortelles*, a cross, an urn, or a beaded star. Pious women could be seen kneeling down on the bare ground and uttering their prayers, unmindful of the crowd; men and women, boys and girls, were busy grubbing up the weeds and grass which had grown upon the graves, planting them with flowers and shrubs, and putting them in order; and one nervous-looking, epileptic girl, in deep black, was lying by the side of a newly-made gravelly mound, and giving way to horrible agonies and hysterical shrieks.

In the cemetery the Protestants and Jews are carefully excluded from the ground which has been

consecrated by the Church. There is an imperceptible line which divides the sacred from the heretical portions. That old Mother Church has condescended to admit outside barbarians even within the same walls that enclose her sacred dust is an advance in liberality, since, a few years ago only, she refused a resting-place to the bones of any Protestant, Jew, or other infidel anywhere near those of her own chosen people. Protestants, Jews, and other infidels have reason to be grateful, as probably incapable of appreciating the benefit of clergy (Roman Catholic) they are contented.

Several of the families—as, for example, those of Roederer and Mumm—being composed both of Protestant and Catholic members, have built their tombs in such a way that one half is upon holy and the other on heretical ground. Their several remains are separated by so slight a space, that they may serve as food for the same worms, which, it is natural to suppose, are no respectors of creeds and persons.

I was grieved to see that the tombs of the Jews had been much defaced by Christian hands. All over them were scrawled these words: *Jésus Christ le vrai fils de Dieu*; “Jesus Christ the true Son of God.”

There are other resorts which it pleaseth the people of Rheims to call places of amusement. There are the Sunday and Thursday balls at the *Embarcadère*, a pretty little garden on the edge of

the railway track. Here the provincials, male and female, of Rheims are allowed, under the control of a squad of soldiers from the garrison and a posse of *gens d'armes*, to indulge in the delights of the *cancan*, and, inspired by the mixed influences of cheap beer, love, and music, to whirl in the intimacies of the waltz and polka, adapted by variations to the free-and-easy character of the place. The frequenters are mostly the young clerks of the various trading establishments and the girls of the factories and shops, between whom there is an unmistakeable closeness of relation, though not sanctioned by the bonds of matrimony. There is a perpetual and most unreasonable disposition on the part of the immoderate youth of both sexes to transcend even the large license of indecency allowed. *C'est defendu, Mademoiselle; Vous allez trop loin, Monsieur*; "It is not permitted, Miss;" "You are going too far, Sir;" are being constantly bawled out by those rigid guardians of French virtue with cocked hat and sword, the *gens d'armes*; and not a night passes but some young fellow or damsel has his or her collar ruffled by the rude official grasp. The code of morals of the French police must be a curious study in casuistry. Where so much is permitted, it would be interesting to know upon what principle of ethics any thing is forbidden.

The theatre of Rheims is a miserable little structure, where the audience is so uncomfortably seated

and stifled by bad air, that it requires all the passion of a Frenchman for the *spectacle* to sit through the shortest and liveliest *vaudeville*. The municipality of the town are now building a new theatre and a circus, both of which promise to be creditable specimens of architecture. During the winter there is a constant succession of farces and comic operas, and an occasional attempt at the reproduction of the comedy in vogue at Paris. I sat through a very fair rendering of Sardou's *La famille Benoiton*, in spite of the discomforts of the wretched little playhouse, and I have seen frequently the announcement of pieces which had received the applause of the fastidious audience of the classic *Théâtre Français*.

The decent people of Rheims turn up their noses at the little theatre, but this is more on account of those who frequent it, than because the acting is not deemed worthy of their patronage. Respectability would inevitably lose its prestige if it showed itself openly in the playhouse of Rheims. This, however, does not prevent the staid citizen from going, but he hides himself in a curtained *loge*, and is not always in the best female company. I caught a glance, one night, of the *procureur impérial*, a count or marquis in his own right, of great magisterial importance by the authority of the Emperor Louis Napoleon, and bearing socially the dignity of a husband and the father of a large family, in a close *tête-à-tête* with a notorious kept mistress.

At the little theatre of Rheims a first-class ticket gives the *entrée* not only to the boxes or orchestra, but, to the green-room, where, between the acts, there is always a throng of old and young men, staring at the well-stuffed stockings of the *figurantes*, or exchanging *equivoques* with them as they are undergoing a course of paint, or being draped with gauze.

During the carnival the theatrical performances cease, and the stage of the little building being boarded over, there are masked balls given almost every night. These are imitations in miniature of those in Paris. The vice, however, is as gross, though those who indulge in it are fewer. They make up for sparsity of numbers by an unbounding license. I have never beheld a coarser scene of debauch than was openly exhibited at Rheims, night after night, during the carnival, at the theatre, in the *cafés* and in the streets, where both sexes, whether disguised or not, put no check upon their tongues, gestures, or conduct. A rabid thirst for champagne, hot punch, and other strong drinks prevailed, and every one seemed eager to reach intoxication as the *summum bonum*. Success crowned their efforts, and universal drunkenness was the result.

Rheims has its frequent fairs and holidays. The *fête* of the Emperor Saint Napoleon is celebrated with an unwonted profusion of triumphal arches and fireworks. There are, I don't know how many

other saint days, but they seemed to me to divide the year with the weekly Sundays. *La Foire de Paques*, the Easter Fair, lasts three weeks. Travel in several of the largest streets is intermitted during the whole time. Wooden arcades, with broad avenues for pedestrians and booths for shop-keepers of all sorts, extend through their whole length. Circuses and shows of every kind are built up. Crowds of people throng into the town from all the neighboring country, and day and night, during the whole time, Rheims is lively with buying and selling, eating gingerbread and fried potatoes, laughing at the clown of the circus, pulling at the whiskers of the bearded woman, popping down clay pipes and plaster figures, crowding about Monsieur Le Fort to see him balance on the tip of his rubicund nose an iron crowbar, pushing for a chance for a big roll of barley-sugar like a marshal's baton at the whirling wheel of fortune, and shrieking under the forceps of the great Baron Munchausen, R. O. G. U. E., first dentist to the Emperor and Empress of all the Russias, &c., &c., &c.

The public promenades are tastefully laid out. That along the new boulevard, however, has yet but a scant growth of shade, and the walks are still new and uncomfortably gravelly. That called the *Promenade de Cours* has some tall and wide-spreading oaks and elms, and as it leads to the canal, along which was my favorite walk, I became familiar with its broad avenues and long vistas of

over-arching foliage. It was but little frequented except in summer evenings and on holidays, but it was seldom without a cheerful group of hearty nurses with greedy babies tugging at them, and the same half-dozen chattering old men. I never missed two well-brushed veterans, retired shop-keepers or upper servants on a pension, who, astride the stone bench, were perpetually playing at a game of draughts. Their checker-board was made by marks on the seat, and their men were pebbles picked up from the walk. Frenchmen never fail to find means of indulging their passion for games.

The canal, however, was my favorite resort. It is hardly conceivable how much one who has passed most of his life in a sea-port feels the change on removing to an inland town. Instead of the ever-shifting scenes of the former, he has the unvaried monotony of the latter. Cut off from relations with the outer world, he is bound down to the restricted interests of the isolated locality. These soon become wearisome from uniformity, and contemptible from familiarity, especially to a stranger who has not the stimulus of selfish interest to sustain his powers of endurance. With his mind forced to turn its contemplations upon the little spot, he becomes morbidly conscious of its materiality. He sees it in all its earthiness. The town appears contracted to its first dimensions of an infinitesimal bit of the wide universe; its loftiest structures are dwarfed to their proportionate little-

ness ; and its inhabitants, with their paltry aims in life clearly discernible, reduced to pygmies.

It is astonishing how much more expansive are the sympathies and views of the people of a seaport than those of an inland town. Breadth and universality are the characteristics of the former ; narrowness and selfishness, the prominent qualities of the latter.

The canal at Rheims is that which joins the *Marne* to the *Aisne*, and, uniting Paris with Belgium, extends through a wide space of land. It always seemed to me to open a means of escape for my imagination, when I could break through the close walls of the little town, and I have passed many an hour within the shade of the poplars which border the canal, under the illusion that I was breathing the freer air of the outside world.

In the wide basin there was always a fleet of large canal boats, of immense size, measuring five or six hundred tons. These I regarded with infinite respect, as in other times I have looked upon great ships coming into port from the far-off Indies. Arriving as many of them did from distant places, they seemed to me, from my limited point of view, as messengers from the remote ends of the world. I have watched their loading and unloading time and again. There was always, moreover, a stir of activity and a wholesome smell of tar about the basin, which, as a faint reminder of the busier scenes and more odorous atmosphere of my own native city, was especially welcome.



The sailors, though but fresh-water ones, seemed to be possessed of that rude frankness and robust heartiness which invite and invigorate sympathy. Their families always accompany them, and live perpetually on board the vessels. The children are often born in the hold, and know little of the land but what they learn in passing between the banks of the canal. There was a candor and a freedom of communication about them all, men, women, and children, which contrasted favorably with the shyness and doggedness of the common people of Rheims, who, like all the provincials of France, fly a stranger, especially of the Anglo-Saxon race, as they would a churchyard ghoul.

The walk along the canal, leading out into the country, often brought me to cheerful scenes of field labor, and to little hamlets of stone, nestling in groves of trees. I was never at a loss to find a *cabaret*, where, if there was nothing else to tempt me, I was sure to find a bit of wholesome bread and a bottle of generous wine, at the cost of a few sous only.

Though there were not many people to be seen, I seldom passed without meeting an idle soldier,—for soldiers are scattered all over France,—or overtaking some patient fisherman angling for minnows in the sluggish water of the canal. Canal-boats, with their great hulks dragged slowly along by straining horses, passed up and down; and sometimes a gay wherry, with a crew of the *Régattes*, the boat-club

of Rheims, and a load of unblushing beauties, their mistresses, glided swiftly by.

In the neighboring country of Rheims, during the shooting season, there is an abundance of game,—partridges, quail, and hares,—and a plentiful supply of sportsmen, many of whom talk more of their prowess with powder and shot than give evidence of it. There are still veritable wild boars and wolves in that same forest of Arden, where the Duke in “*As You Like It*” consoled himself for exile in finding

“tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.”

The forest is but a short distance from Rheims, some of whose rich men keep packs of boar-hounds, and, mounted on horses, scour that ancient wood, sacred to the druids and celebrated by poesy and romance, in pursuit of its “native burghers.” I met an acquaintance in the streets of Rheims, who said that on the day before he had bagged two wild boars and a wolf, and spontaneously offered to me the skin of the latter; but it never, as the merchants say, came to hand.

## CHAPTER XIX.

An Old Proverb — Ingenious Interpretation — The Bœotia of France — Intellectual Character of the People — One Newspaper — One Public Lecture — Reading and Writing — Ignorance of the Better Classes — Schools — Priestly Pedagogues — Clipped-winged Youth — Rarity of Books — Conversation — The Club — Imperial Academy — Deep Drinkers and Gross Feeders — Tripe and Slugs — Inhumanity — Hat Politeness — Insult.

*QUATRE-VINGT-DIX* *neuf moutons et un Champenois font cent bêtes*, is an old and generally accepted saying in France. The word *bête* having the double signification of “beast” and “fool,” makes it difficult in translating the French phrase to retain its full point. “Ninety-nine sheep and one inhabitant of Champagne make a hundred brutes,” is the nearest approach in English; but the word “brute” should be taken only in its early and less gross signification of a creature without reason.

Napoleon, when in 1813 he stood at bay in Champagne against the invading forces of all Europe, asked an inhabitant of the country whence originated this by no means complimentary proverb. “Sire,” answered the man, who proved to be far

from *bête*,—a creature without reason,—“in ancient times a tax was laid upon every flock of a hundred sheep which entered the town, and accordingly the peasants never brought in more than ninety-nine at a time. The powerful feudal lord of the manor, who was the author of the tribute, vexed that it failed to bring him in the amount he had expected, took his post at the gate, and determined to collect the revenue himself. Here he awaited the passage of the shepherds with their flocks. As each one came up with his ninety-nine animals, his lordship pointed him out to his men-at-arms, saying: ‘Make him pay! *quatre-vingt-dix neuf moutons et un Champenois font cent bêtes.*’”

As the saying had been circulating for centuries, and its interpretation was only evoked at the late date of 1813, it is not unreasonable to infer that the latter sprung solely from the ready wit of an exceptional *Champenois*, and that the former should retain its obvious sense, as applied to the people of Champagne generally.

French history and romance both give their sanction to the truth of the old proverb. The Queen of Navarre in her “*Contes*,” and Louis XI. in his “*Nouvelles*,” speak of the *Champenois* as *sots et lourdières*,—fools and heavy fellows. In the archives of Troyes, a town of Champagne, there is a letter from Charles V., in which he informs the mayor of the death of his fool, and orders him to send another to take his place, *suivant la coutume*,—ac-

according to custom. The philosophic Diderot, too, in the famous Encyclopædia, the most enlightened expression of opinion of the time, calls the province of Champagne the Bœotia of France.

The inhabitants of Champagne, and especially those of Rheims, its chief city, are certainly not an intellectual people. With a population of nearly a hundred and fifty thousand, there is in the whole *arrondissement* but one newspaper, published at Rheims, and that a wretched affair, which any American printer's devil would be ashamed of editing. I hardly ever saw in it a line of original matter, expressive either of the sentiments of its conductor or of the opinion of the public, for whose interests it is supposed to have been established. Its first page always contained an undigested summary of the political news of the Parisian journals, two days after those journals had been received at every *café* in the town; its second page was filled with the tardy official reports of public sales, of bankruptcies, and of the criminal records of the courts, the interest of which had been already exhausted by a full week's conversation; its third and fourth pages were covered with advertisements, which, no doubt, were interesting to servants out of place and to masters in search of them, but by no means amusing or instructive to the general reader.

I was nearly two years at Rheims, and during that time there was but one public lecture. "Pub-

lic," however, is a misnomer, for the Mayor of the city, the great Monsieur Werlé, having the whole affair in his own hands, kept it exclusively for himself and his friends. A literary person of high culture, no doubt, for he came direct from the great centre of civilization, was invited from Paris to deliver his lecture at the expense of the municipality. He came and proclaimed views on the safe subject of *Madame de Sevigné*, and was listened to by all the *élite* of the town, who, having been thought worthy of sitting together within the same walls, were honored with tickets.

A great many of the common people can neither read nor write, and those who can, do both very imperfectly. I hardly ever received a bill, even from the better class of tradesmen, which was not full of errors of orthography, and an almost illegible scrawl. There is not a street in Rheims where there are not staring signs, with words so familiar that their sense can be easily understood, though so misspelt that the French Academy would never acknowledge them as its own.

Those who have just pretensions to education are withal strangely ignorant of some branches of learning,—for example, of geography. On one occasion a wine-merchant, knowing well that I was an officer of the United States, handed me an invoice for Canada to legalize, and when I returned it he was greatly surprised at learning that Canada was a British province. On another occasion, a no less

imposing personage asked me to perform a consular act relative to Brazil. The whole world, with the exception of France, seemed a *terra incognita* to these people, and there was hardly one in a hundred of them who could tell whether I came from America by land or water.

There is an imperial lyceum, formerly the university, and a considerable number of public and private schools, but these are mostly under the control of the Church, which takes care to keep the rising intelligence so hooded and shackled that it may not see or move beyond its sacred precincts. *Les frères Chrétiens*, an order of black friars, whose sole duty in life it is to mould flexible youth in the traditionary forms of ecclesiastical discipline, have the management of most of the institutions for the education of the rich as well as the poor. There never was a more devoted set of pedagogues. A child once in their grasp becomes as incapable of liberty of action as a fly in molasses. Nothing can be better calculated than the system of education they pursue,—to destroy all individuality of character and freedom of thought. The discipline is as rigid, and the formalities are as unvarying, as those of a monastery. The pupil has constantly the eye of his sombre master upon him. At his studies, at his meals, during his play-hours, in going and returning from home, the black friar is ever at his side, watching, listening, and directing. The minds of the pupils are contracted, not only by a narrow

intellectual education fit only for a monk, but their natural tastes and caprices are crushed out, and even the motions of their bodies subdued by an unvarying uniformity of dress and movement.

I have often pitied these poor boys, on seeing them on their daily walks and at their daily pastimes; they were always marched out in regular order, and seemed to me, with their uniform dresses of dark blue, and the long black robes of their monkish teachers who flanked them, a funereal procession of mourners and mutes going to the burial of youth, "dead ere its prime."

The games, even of the elder boys, were always of the most child-like character. They never played at base or cricket, or anything requiring force and perseverance. Their most vigorous exercise was tossing from hand to hand a light ball of caoutchouc, such as is used by children in our drawing-rooms. The black friar was always there too, as close to the lads as their shadows. Boys will be boys everywhere, even occasionally in France, and I was not surprised to find them often disputing and quarreling; but instead of settling their difficulties among themselves by hearty invective or a stout appeal to fisticuffs, they referred all questions at once to their priestly guardian, who, to do him justice, appeared never to fail in adjusting matters. With a few insinuating words he soothed the angry disputants, and the difficulty generally ended with the appeased parties blubbing in each other's



arms. Tale-bearing, which with us is considered so odious, seemed to be encouraged by the black friars, whom I have seen pat again and again the youngsters on the head with evident approval, as they delivered themselves of their burdens of complaint against their fellows. This system may make what mothers delight to call "nice boys," but it can never lay the foundation of a vigorous manhood.

I never was in a place calling itself civilized, where books of all kinds appeared so scarce as at Rheims. With the exception of an occasional ragged and well-thumbed copy of the younger Dumas's licentious "*Dame aux Camelias*," or that calendar of the French galleys, the "*Résurrection de Rocambole*," I seldom saw any evidence of an interest in the current literature of the day. Among the wealthiest people, surrounded by all the modern luxuries inciting to sensual gratification, there was rarely any indication of intellectual enjoyment. In the best appointed houses there were apparently no libraries, and I never by chance caught a person turning over the leaves of the last new book, or found it lying within reach on centre-table or *étagère*. The town gossip, the bankruptcy of this merchant, or the infidelity of that woman, formed the staple of conversation, and literature or books never. Domestic politics were carefully eschewed, and there was no disposition, as far as I could see, to question the wisdom of Louis Napoleon, and his

right to do as he pleased. During his reign the material prosperity of Rheims has so increased, that there did not seem to be a man who was inclined, even if he dared, to doubt the benefits of imperial absolutism. Of foreign politics the public talked more freely, but their sentiments were seldom of a liberal character. The North, during our struggle, had but one sympathizer that I could discover, and in the German war the feeling was almost entirely with Austria and against Prussia. There is little interest, however, felt in political questions of any kind, for the people generally do not read or think enough to talk of them. Rheims, though stolidly content with imperial rule, is prepared, no doubt, like all provincial France, blindly to follow the wake of Paris, whether it should lead to the enthronement of a Bourbon, an Orleans, or the establishment of a republic.

The librarian of the public library mourned over his solitude, and denounced a town so absorbed in its material interests and sensual enjoyments as never to take a book from his shelves. I found at the club, called a *Salon de Lecture*, a reading-room, upon the *lucus a non lucendo* principle no doubt, always a large gathering of men, with leisure enough, for they spent most of the best hours of the day there, but never doing any thing but smoking, drinking beer, shuffling cards, and playing at billiards. There were all the reviews and magazines of Paris, but I was always sure of finding

them disengaged, and as fresh and uncut as when they first came from the press. There was but a single bookstore of any account in the place, and in it there was no stock of the new publications of the day, although a patient purchaser, by waiting several weeks might possibly obtain what he wanted, from the capital.

No doubt there were books enough and reading-men among the clerical portion of the inhabitants, but, like the monks of the Middle Ages, they kept all the learning and literature to themselves. There is, it is true, an Imperial Academy at Rheims, where I found, on being present at one of its meetings, in addition to the presiding officers, an audience composed of two priests, an old woman, and myself. Its principal business seemed to be the reading of the rejected poems sent in competition for the annual prize, given by the Academy for the best copy of verses on some local subject,—the visit of the Emperor Napoleon, the Influence of Champagne, &c. The Academy publishes an annual report of its proceedings, and on looking over a long range of volumes, I found them made up of treatises on the best modes of corking wine, with an occasional archæological paper by some patient ecclesiastic, on the headless statue of Saint Nicaise, or the mutilated remains of the great Saint Remi of the Cathedral.

The common people, brutalized by ignorance, are rude in manners, and given to sensual indulgence.

They are deep drinkers and gross feeders. Rheims is filled with low *cabarets* or wine-shops, and though drunkenness is generally supposed to be uncommon in France, it is by no means rare in Champagne. In every street, almost, *Asperges à toutes heures* may be seen posted up on the doors of the low *cafés* and restaurants. The word *asperge* has the local signification of tripe, which is a favorite article of food with the voracious inhabitants of Rheims;

“*Patinas cœnabat omasi vilis.*”

The common slug or snail, the slimy wanderer of our gardens, is another choice article of the dainty diet of the people. The ugly monster is sealed down within its shell by a thick paste composed of butter, hot spices, and flour, and being thus prevented from wriggling out, is thrown into a pot of boiling water. In a few moments it is withdrawn, served up, and eaten with great gusto by its devourer, who, provided with a little two-pronged fork made for the purpose, draws out the snail deliberately from the convolutions of its shell, and holding it up, stretched out in all its ugly proportions, throws back his head and drops it into his gaping mouth.

Infirmity, whether of nature or disease, finds but little pity or sympathy from these coarse people. I have seen a poor hunchback or cripple jeered at time and again by the laborers on the streets, and forced to beat a quick retreat from the presence of his cruel persecutors. There are brutal fellows

enough with us, but I do not believe that there are any grown up men who would venture thus to outrage the public sense of humanity.

A great deal is said of the politeness of the French, and it is true that there are no people in the world who take off their hats so often, and abound so much in complimentary phrases. These formalities are much more frequent in the provinces than in the capital. An American, who passed some months at Rheims, said that it puzzled him to conceive how the people, as all their time seemed occupied with taking off and putting on their hats, contrived to do any thing else. To me the excessive uncovering, the bowing and scraping, and the perpetual offers of service, became very oppressive; for I soon discovered that they were generally cheap substitutes for real civility, and that they were to be taken as a receipt in full of the thing they pretended to signify. Deduct the hat and the wordy compliments, and the Frenchman of Rheims, at any rate, is by no means a model of politeness. The surliest John Bull is more of a Chesterfield at heart, and less capable of offence against good breeding.

I had not been a week at Rheims when I was grossly insulted, at the highest official table of the place, by a person to whom I had been especially introduced as the first wine-merchant of the whole country. On speaking of an act of our government he styled it an "infamy," and seemed to have

introduced the subject for the purpose of so designating it, for I had studiously avoided all allusion to political questions. What seemed to me to give a more gross aspect to the conduct of this person was the fact that I was present as the especial guest of the dinner, given in my honor.

## CHAPTER XX.

The Delectable City—Plenty of Churches—Tenacity of Belief—Abounding Priests—Their Character—The Cardinal-Archbishop—Skulking Priests—Exclusion from Society—The Man of the World *Curé*—The Priestly *Curé*—The Tidy Girls of Rheims—*Rentreeuses*—Beauty and Corruption—Famous Beauties—Licentiousness—*Mariage de Convenance*—Fast Married Women—No Society.

ON first entering Rheims, I thought that I had at last reached the delectable city of piety and virtue. The tall spires rising on every side, the constant ringing of church bells, and the black-robed priest seen at each turn, with bended heads conning their missals, as they crept humbly on in the shades of the narrow streets, were an indication that the place was amply provided, at least with all the paraphernalia of religion. The general quiet and order of the town, formal and tranquil even to dullness; the well-fed and neatly dressed citizens; the laborers in their decent blouses, the shop-women smiling contentedly over their polished counters, and the tidy factory girls, with a great roll of cloth under each arm, toiling along like industrious ants with loads bigger than themselves, seemed unmistakable evidences of virtuous industry and its rewards.

I had not been long, however, in Rheims, before I discovered that its virtue was but a semblance, and that it merited its reputation of being the most corrupt city in France. It does not want, it is true, for religion, and is in the full enjoyment of the benefit of clergy. Though but twenty only are left of the forty-eight ecclesiastical establishments Rheims possessed before the Revolution of 1790 laid its rude hand upon the Church, there are still enough, including the Cathedral, to hold the whole population of sixty thousand, and they are well frequented, particularly by women and children. I had no reason to doubt the sincerity of faith of the people of Rheims. On the contrary, I had every proof of their tenacity of belief, and never met a man, woman, or child, who did not devoutly toss pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, kneel each year at the holy shrine of Saint Remi, take the benefit of the sacred touch, and swear to the truth of the miracle of the white pigeon with its phial of oil of celestial manufacture.

There is a very numerous body of ecclesiastics at Rheims, embracing every grade from the Cardinal Archbishop to the chorister boy. Each order of the Church is represented. There are Jesuits, Black Friars and Gray, Carmelites and Saint Franciscans, Sisters of Charity, Sisters of the Sacred Heart, Sisters of the Holy Child Jesus, and a great seminary filled with three or four hundred acolytes or students, undergoing the theological process of preparation for the tonsure and cassock.



The general moral character of the clergy of Rheims I never heard questioned. The Cardinal-Archbishop Gousset, whose red cap,\* alas! now hangs by the side of that of his predecessor† from the rafters of the Cathedral, was a man of the most disinterested benevolence. He gave much the larger portion of his handsome revenue to the poor, by whom he was greatly beloved. He deprived himself, in consequence, of all the luxuries which are generally conceded to a personage of his rank, and of many of the comforts of life which are essential to the support of the infirmities of age. He sold the carriage and horses of the archiepiscopal establishment, and though with the command of a whole palace, he lived among his books in a little corner of it, and barely nurtured himself with a meagre lenten fare throughout the whole year.

I have seen the aged Cardinal often at the Cathedral, and have admired the venerable aspect of the tall, thin old man, tottering under the heavy scarlet robes of office. As he presented his jeweled finger to be kissed by the adoring crowd, he seemed to single out the little children, and favor them with an especial kindness of smile. No one at Rheims spoke an ill word of the venerable ecclesiastic.

\* It is the custom to hang from the height of the arched roof of the Cathedral, above the vault beneath the sanctuary reserved for the burial of the Archbishops, the hat of a dead Cardinal: it is allowed to remain there until the cord which holds it gives way; whoever first picks up the hat is entitled to a gratuity.

† The Cardinal de Latil.

Victor Hugo, however, has exposed, in that degrading historical pillory, *Napoleon le Petit*, which he has set up to the eternal shame of tyranny, the benevolent Archbishop Gousset, charged as an accomplice of the great criminal, the present Emperor, in the cruel assassination of French liberty.

At Rheims the clergy seem a class of men apart, and entirely distinct, from the rest of the community. They go skulking about the streets like so many lepers or outcasts from society. I hardly ever saw one of the numerous priests in company with a layman. At the many dinners and other social gatherings, where I have been a guest, I never met an ecclesiastic. When, moreover, I expressed a desire to make the acquaintance of the clergy, my wish was met almost with derision, and always with an expression of surprise, as if I were seeking something that the usage of good society forbade.

This exclusion of the clergy must act unfavorably, not only upon them, but on the laity. It makes of the former a class of mere Bonzes, or conductors of public ceremonials, with the sole duty of lighting the candles, uncovering the idols, doing the posturing, and enacting the other performances required by a traditional superstition. The moral and intellectual influence which, with the learning and virtue they may possess, they might exercise upon the people, is entirely lost. Their example as decent livers, and the refining effect of their conversation

as men of cultivated minds, are much wanted by the grossly sensual and unintellectual people of Rheims.

By the merest accident I made the acquaintance of two of the most prominent priests of Rheims, one the *curé*\* of the Cathedral, and the other the *curé* of Saint Thomas. I find them both, in accordance with their general reputation, men of the utmost affability of manners and integrity of character.

The *curé* of the Cathedral having passed his early life in the army, had acquired, by a freer intercourse with his fellows, a flexibility of mind that all the pressure of ecclesiastical formality and discipline had not succeeded in stiffening. I accordingly found him always ready for the discussion of worldly topics, and disposed to take, within church limits, a liberal view of social and political questions. He is a stalwart man, over six feet in height, of goodly rotundity of person, and rubicund face, jointly expressive of jollity and benevolence. He is a man of great activity and business capacity. Though he resigned, while I was at Rheims, his position as *curé*, he retained the office of treasurer of the Cathedral, whose immense property, one of the largest of any ecclesiastical establishment in the world, he has administered for a score of years with consummate ability.

\* *Curé* is not the equivalent of curate in English, but of vicar; and *vicair* in French is the same as curate in English.

He has obtained wealth from the thrift of a long career, for he is now about seventy years of age. The house in which he lives, just under the eaves of the Cathedral, belongs to him, and has one of the snuggest interiors in all Rheims. I dined frequently with him, and never dined better. His wine-cellar is one of the best of the whole province of Champagne, and he is no niggard of its generous stores when he has a guest at his table capable of appreciating his bottles of the choicest vintage. On my first morning visit he pressed upon me a glass of *maraschino*, saying that I would find it good, as he had it in his cellar since some thirty years before, when the Cardinal had made him a present of it. I was, on tasting it, grateful to him for his urgency in overcoming my reluctance, and took a second glass without even being asked.

In addition to his other acquirements, which are various and profound, he is an excellent player at billiards, and has set up a table in his own house for the amusement of himself and clerical friends.

The *curé* of Saint Thomas I found more of the priest in his appearance, manners, and range of thought. He is a little shriveled up man, with an ascetic length and dryness of face, though with a smile of exceeding benevolence. I saw him for the first time on a Sunday, just on his return from preaching a sermon, as he told me, on the Devil, whom, I have no doubt, he painted in all his awful materiality of horns, hoofs, barbed tail, and breath

of fire. He was full of chat, and plunged at once into the subject of the American war, which he deplored greatly, and said that if the Pope had been still the sovereign of the world, as he ought to and would again be, the difficulty between the North and South would have been settled without a blow, and simply by a word from the holy mouth of the successor of Saint Peter.

Freemasonry the *curé* thought the great evil of the present day, and he denounced it vigorously as destructive of all good morals. "History, particularly English," he said, "was a lie. Not one of the British historians, with the exception of the priest Lingard, ever told the truth." The good *curé* of Saint Thomas, although his head may still be enveloped in the darkness of the Middle Ages, has his heart in the right place. He is a devoted friend of the poor people of the crowded and dirty suburb over which his ministration extends, and is revered and beloved by the great and humble alike.

I was surprised to learn, as I soon did, that those tidy girls whom I had noticed toiling along the streets with their great burdens, and had compared, at first sight, to so many industrious ants, were no better, but in fact a great deal worse, than they should be. From the police authorities, whose sharp eyes are constantly on them, I learned that the young working females, almost without exception, added to what they received for labor the wages of sin. They all work with more or less

industry, for they can only thus retain a *quasi* respectability, and keep themselves from being registered by the police as professional outcasts, upon whom they look down with supreme contempt. These girls are generally what is called *Rentriereuses*, and their business consists in filling up with the needle the defects left in all the stuffs woven by machinery. They go in crowds to the various factories, where the rolls of cloth are given out, and bearing them off do their work at home. These girls thus loaded down, going and coming, are a noticeable feature of the street-life of Rheims. They are all coquettishly dressed, and most of them more expensively than the twenty or thirty sous they gain a day as *Rentriereuses* could possibly account for. The *Mabille* and *Closerie* of Paris are said to be largely recruited from these girls of Rheims, who have the reputation of beauty. They certainly have a large share of personal charms. Champagne, in fact, has been long noted both for its lovely and facile women. Marion Delorme—the famous courtesan who brought to her knees Louis XIII. and his crafty counsellor Richelieu, had De Grammont and Saint Evremond for lovers, and the unfortunate Cinq Mars and an English lord for husbands—was born in Champagne. Victor Hugo makes that graceful creature of his imagination, Esmeralda, first to see the light at Rheims, where her mother, born under the shadow of the great Cathedral, was the victim of a heartless seducer.

Though such a relation is not so openly acknowledged at Rheims as in Paris, it is universally allowed that every man, whether single or married, has his mistress. Most of the young clerks, who are generally from a distance, are never in any other female society, for they are not admitted within the secluded precincts of the homes of the thriving citizens. The unmarried girls, except of the lower classes, are jealously guarded, and are not permitted to have the least communication with the youth of the opposite sex. I never saw the daughter of respectability, so-called, in the streets unaccompanied by her parents, governess, or aged female servant. This indicated, it seemed to me, a great fear on the part of anxious relatives of danger from within, or from without, or from both. The corruption of the male youth is notorious; but whether the virtue of the young girls is too unsound to resist the contamination of its slightest contact, is more than I can say, but I know that there is not a mother in Rheims willing to take the risk.

The most degrading and demoralizing feature of the system of life pursued by the young working-girls, is the fact that it is in most instances with the connivance of their parents, who share the proceeds of the double career of infamy and industry of their daughters. A moral cancer, with its roots thrust deep down into the constitution of society, and deriving nutriment from the very sources of

life, would seem impossible of eradication. The more thriving classes even escape it only by the subterfuge of a change of name. Their system of *mariages de convenance* is little else than a legalized version of the same thing, and results, if common rumor can be believed, in consequences equally destructive of all social obligations. There is hardly a woman, even in the highest ranks of society, if prominent from the *éclat* of personal attractions, at whom scandal does not point its busy finger. This may not be proof of guilt, for Rheims, like all provincial towns, is so rife with gossip that even purity and innocence are no doubt often maligned.

There is an audacity, too, of display on the part of some of the wives of the rich men of Rheims, showing itself by extravagance of dress, frequent publicity, open coquetry, the aping of the habits and unreserved manners of the *grisette* or *cocotte* (as she is now termed), in smoking cigarettes, wearing apparel of exaggerated cut and color, and indulging in freedom of conversation and attitude, which so likens them in appearance to the *demi-monde* that they are, unjustly perhaps, considered as belonging to it.

The illegitimate relation which prevails between the men of the better and the young women of the lower classes, is marked by great cruelty on the part of the former. No sooner is there an indication of the natural fruit of such a connection, than the



poor girl is deserted and left solely to maintain her offspring, the whole responsibility of whose support is thrown by the French law upon the abandoned mother. Rheims is thus full of children of unrecognized paternity. The victims of men's heartless pleasures are often treated with great brutality, and one constantly hears of scenes of personal violence.

There is little at Rheims of what may be justly called society. The rich people, it is true, give occasionally set dinners and balls, to show off their fine upholstery and ostentatiously exhibit their evidences of wealth and fashion, but few families open their doors to the admission of friends and acquaintances on terms of intimacy. The young men are especially debarred from all freedom of social intercourse, and are thus forced back upon the profligate associations in which they so freely indulge.



## APPENDIX.

—o—

THE following is a translation of a bit of French doggerel I picked up at Rheims. It gives the spirit, and does not pretend to be an improvement upon the form of the original :—

### Legend of Saint Remy.

Of good saints there ne'er was a better than he,  
I mean that good bishop, the great Saint Remy ;  
    He would smell out a witch  
    Like a terrier bitch ;  
He made a great ado to get up a stew  
Of a heretic or unbelieving Jew.  
They made him a saint, and would have made him Pope,  
For what in these days he'd have hung by a rope ;  
    But murder and arson  
    Were right for a parson  
When Mother Church was in her fullest renown,  
Knocking heretics down by tap on the crown ;  
That's the way might had of defending the right  
In those dark ages when they put out the light.  
  
He was greatly beloved by all, great and small,  
There was n't a church to refuse him a call,  
    But at Rheims he would stay  
    Where he had his own way ;  
They called him to Paris, wanted him at Rome,  
But, strange to say, he preferred to stay at home.

The ladies liked their fashionable preacher,  
He was a "nice man" and "such a good creature."  
There was n't one who sat under him, I ween,  
Who admired him like her majesty the queen ;

She went to church in state,  
And never went too late ;

At mass high and low she was on bended knee,  
And such a good Christian you never did see ;  
But her husband the king was an old scapegrace,  
And inside the church never showed his face ;

For men who like to sin  
Hardly ever go in.

But her majesty greatly loved her Clovis,  
And strove to save him, for such woman's love is.  
So one day, with a kiss and pat on the cheek,  
She led her old man like a lamb, mild and meek ;  
He got to the church and began to refuse,  
For he liked not to go where he did not choose.

Men like to have their way  
Whether to go or stay.  
He got to the door,  
And would not stir more ;

He made every excuse and told a big fib,  
But the queen gave no heed to her darling rib ;  
And at last, by dint of pulling and tugging,  
Flatt'ring and cajoling, kissing and hugging,  
She into the church got the king fairly in,  
And it was thus he got convinced of his sin.

Now Saint Remy, to cleanse him of all this sin,  
Soused him in holy water up to his chin ;

Thus all the old Druid,  
Washed in holy fluid,

Was turned to a good Christian both pure and clean,  
Thanks to Saint Remy and to Clotilde the queen.  
Clovis, it's true, had been king many a year,  
But he had not the divine right, it's quite clear ;  
For he had not been rubbed with the holy grease,  
Without which no king could ever reign in peace.

So that his majesty might be anointed,  
Saint Remy had a certain day appointed.

A great preparation  
For the consecration

Was made in Rheims, and the people all in Gaul  
Came from far and near at the holy saint's call.  
The streets were all tapestry, the walls all flags,  
The palace all banners, the houses all rags;  
Then, to be sure, there was a great procession,  
King, queen, holy priest, all in due succession ;

A great number of boys,  
And a very loud noise

Of sackbut, harp, and music of every sound,  
So that little else could be heard all around.  
The show mazed the king, and so dazzled his eyes,  
He asked if he were looking on Paradise ;  
" Not Paradise, sire, but the only true route,  
If you want to be sure not to be kept out."

This, Saint Remy, it 'a clear,  
Whispered in royal ear

At the great church, king, queen, and priest all arrived ;  
And the king was ready after he 'd been shrived.  
All was in state, but for oil they had to wait,  
For the clerk had the fate to arrive too late.  
Saint Remy, looking glum, began to sputter,  
When down came a white dove all in a flutter.  
(Some wicked people, who have no religion,  
Declare it was nothing but a tame pigeon.)  
Around its neck it had a holy ampulla,  
Full of oil of a sweet smell and purest color.  
There had never been a miracle so great !  
The clerk was too late and the saint could not wait.  
The dove came direct from heaven in post-haste,  
For there was not a single moment to waste ;

If it had been delayed,  
Had miracle been made ?

No ! for the clerk, though too late, was good and true,  
And at last came pushing through, all in a stew.



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The composition of our literary staff will be eminently International: a graceful blending of right English oak and ash with the tough but pliant hickory, the graceful bird's-eye maple, and the fascinating butternut. We desire that the English green lane should lead to the wide Western prairie, and that our little English brooks which, tiny as they are, "run on for ever," should empty themselves into the giant lakes of the American continent. To abandon metaphor, we have made, and are making, arrangements with the best authors and authoresses of the United States for the supply of original MSS., exclusively to be published by us. Some of our British contributors also may from time to time touch on American subjects: the "international" character of our Magazine will thus be sedulously kept in view, to the drawing closer together, we trust, of the bonds of union between the two countries.

We have thus sketched out, as comprehensively as we are enabled to do, the plan of an undertaking which, energetically conducted, cannot fail, we hope, to achieve a legitimate success. The ultimate verdict rests, of course, with the public; but our Way is very Broad indeed. The world may enter in numbers as fast as ever they please without fear of being jostled or crushed. There will be plenty to see on both sides of the way; and there shall be nothing narrow in our proceedings save our price, which may be emphatically said to be "as thin as a sixpence."

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